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THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

SOME OF THE CAUSES WHICH HINDER A REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

Whoever has taken the trouble to investigate the early history of New-England, as it respects religion, with a view to settle this question, whether our Fathers had Revivals of Religion? must have become fully convinced that such was the fact. Several of the first generations, born in this land, were nearly all brought into the christian church by a credible profession of personal piety. During the prevalence of lax opinions respecting the qualifications of church membership, and the undisputed reign of the half-way-covenant, these scenes of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, were granted sparingly to the churches, and for considerable time, almost wholly withheld. It pleased God, however, to raise up the immortal Edwards, to reform his churches, in this land and from his day, we may date the commencement of the New-England Reformation.—From that day to this, Revivals of great power, purity, and genuineness have been enjoyed not only in N. England, but in nearly all parts of the U. States. This then seems to be the great method, adopted by the counsels of infinite wisdom for building up the kingdom of Christ in this country.—Whether it is owing to any thing peculiar in the state of society in this land, or in the theology, or manner of preaching which prevails among us, that seasons of refreshing in this peculiar form, are nearly or wholly confined at present to the U. S. I am not able to determine. Be that as it may, to us nothing is of more importance than facts respecting Revivals of religion. This field however is too wide for the present paper—I shall confine myself to remarks on some of the causes which hinder Revivals—(These causes must be found in the state of society, of men's hearts and views, and in their conduct.) True, we are dependent on God for the influence of the Holy Spirit, without which nothing can be done. But he has most solemnly assured us, that he is more ready to give the Holy

Spirit to those who ask him, than earthly parents are to give bread to their hungry children. We are not straitened in him, but in our own bowels. Every man, who has the bible in his hand, must subscribe to the sentiment, that on God's part "all things are ready." Among the causes then found in our churches and parishes, which hinder a Revival of religion, may be reckoned,

1. A state of contention. It is of little importance what is the subject of contention, if contention exists. It may be respecting worldly business merely, or it may relate to denominative distinctions, or to a meeting-house, or a minister, or politics or any thing else. Wherever the spirit of contention is found, the Spirit of God is not This is sure, while it lasts, to prevent the commencement of a Revival, and when commenced, if it then arises, to bring it to a speedy termination. It is impossible that it should not have this effect. Contention absorbs public attention, and chains it down to this world. A Revival demands public attention, and elevates it above the world. Contention destroys love: but a Revival without love, is a Revival without religion. Contention destroys a spirit of prayer. Without prayer, there can be no Revival. God will be inquired of for these things to do them for us. God will be known as the God of peace. He forsakes every place, where peace is wanting. When the apostle said, be at peace among yourselves, be exhorted to that, without which the use of the means of grace will be unavailing.

2. Nearly allied to the above, is a spirit of speculation in matters of religion. I do not mean by this a spirit of honest and candid inquiry respecting the fundamental principles of religion, those which are essential to the formation of the christian character. This spirit of inquiry is a favourable omen; a proof that the deathlike insensibility and indifference, so natural to man on the subject of religion, is beginning to yield to the force of conscience and the light of truth. But when a spirit of eager and zealous disputation arises, respecting points acknowledged on all hands not to be essential to the christian system, this may be called, and this is precisely what I mean, by a spirit of speculation. This spirit is unfriendly to a Revival. Not only does it turn off the minds of men from great practical and experimental subjects of vital importance, but it necessarily lowers the tone of earnest piety, manifested in a deep concern for the welfare of souls, and the prosperity of Zion. Whatever professions may be made of zeal for the glory of God, as the motive of indulging a speculative spirit, if the heart is so absorbed in these speculations as to leave it cold and dead in regard to the salvation of souls, all such professions are to be suspected. Zeal for the glory

of God, when true and genuine, is always associated with a deep concern for the salvation of men. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." Our proper business is to glorify God by seeking the salvation of men. It is truly melancholy, when a minister goes into a strange place to display "the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel," to find that numbers, even of professed christians, are listening to him, and waiting every word, with keen-eyed criticism, to ascertain whether he believes or rejects the peculiarities of their own favorite schemes. What hope is there that such men will hear to the salvation of their souls, or will be impelled by what they hear to the more vigorous discharge of every duty? do not such hearers abound in some of our congregations? And are not the hearts of some pious and faithful ministers sunk in discouragement, and broken, to witness the blasting effects of this spirit on all their labors and efforts? What is most to be deplored is, men are found on all sides of all questions, which respect subjects not of vital importance, who do not attach such an undue importance to their philosophical views and tenets, as to suspect, and almost fear a Revival in which those opinions are not fully embraced.

3. This leads me to remark, that another cause of hinderance to a Revival, is a want of faithfulness in preaching the essential doctrines of the gospel. Here I would remark, that some allowance should be made for those honest-hearted pious ministers, who are as yet unenlightened respecting some of the vital principles of the gospel. President Edwards remarks, that an imperfect ministry may have *some* good things in it, on account of which God may see fit to crown it with his blessing. Indeed we can hardly suppose that any ministry is wholly without imperfection.—But what I refer to, is a disposition to keep out of sight, certain truths because they are deemed unprofitable. Can we expect a blessing on a ministry which aims to be wiser than God? The same objection lies against keeping back important truth, because it will give offence. That minister, who is so far governed by the fear of man, as to be more afraid of the loss of salary than of the souls of his people, will in all probability loose both. Nor is it sufficient to exhibit all important truth, just for the sake of saving the conscience from distress, but in so cloaked, and concealed, and muffled a manner that scarcely any body shall understand it, or feel its edge. There is, undoubtedly, such a thing as imprudence in preaching truth, and there is a pride of faithfulness, which makes what should be a humble preacher a theological Goliah, which cannot be too conscientiously avoided. President Edwards ob-

jects to the sentiment, that it is right and best to stir up as much enmity as possible by preaching. I know, said he, there is a very great and deep and amazing enmity in the carnal heart against God, and his word—so deep and strong that it would be dangerous to have it all awakened. But still unless the vital truths of the gospel are so faithfully, and plainly and forcibly inculcated from the pulpit, that people are obliged to see them, and feel that they are demonstrated, little hope can be entertained that they will be subdued by the gospel.—What I contend for is a plain exhibition of vital truth. It is easy for a man to deceive himself, by saying truth must be preached, and include in the word truth such speculations as are beyond the essential principles of religion. Edwards was a model on this subject.

4. Another cause of hinderance to Revivals is an injudicious exhibition of the doctrines of the gospel. There is no doctrine so plain as not to be capable of distortion. Something may, without any bad intention, be added to, or subtracted from, what the bible has taught which will entirely change the complexion, and nature, and influence of the doctrine. Total depravity may be represented, as it is in a famous "Contrast," to "mean the defilement of the *understanding*, *conscience*, and all the *natural powers* of the soul." This must imply that total depravity makes men natural fools, and not the proper objects of moral obligation. On this view of the subject, regeneration must imply the communication of new natural power to the understanding, and new natural faculties to the soul. Man's dependance and impotence may be so viewed as to lead him to feel and say he has nothing to do—the only course left for him is to lie perfectly still in his grave till a voice from heaven commands his moral resurrection. If he is to be saved, he shall be, and if he is to be lost, he shall be. If he is ever saved, it will be without an anxious thought on his part—and if go to hell he must, he will not be tormented before-hand with one pang of fear. I might adduce many more examples of the baneful influence of injudicious representations of christian doctrine—but must forbear. It is very much in consequence of such representations, that such multitudes at the present day are sunk into a total stupidity. The chills of the second death are already upon them. I would that this single declaration of the great Dr. Hopkins might be felt by every soul in this land—"Sinners are under no inability, which does not consist in opposition of heart to the will of God." This subject, an injudicious exhibition of doctrines, is worthy the particular attention of pious laymen. Not but that there are private members of some of our churches who are as well instructed as most clergymen—and are as capable of explaining and

defending any important doctrine. But *all* pious laymen are not thus enlightened. They are not to conclude from this, that they are incapable of usefulness. There is a sphere in which they may act with great efficiency and success. This, however, is not, ordinarily, in propounding deep and difficult points of doctrine, and endeavouring to solve and remove objections. They may do much to convince their families and friends of the reality and importance of religion, and when their attention is so far awakened that they become inquirers and objectors, can bring them under the personal instructions of a minister.

5. Spiritual pride among christians is another cause of hinderance to Revivals. This evil, most hateful and disgusting in itself, has a direct influence to prevent the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit.—God may see so much of this in the heart of a minister, as to render it certain in his own mind, that if he were to grant the least success to his ministry, he would be lifted up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil. He may see so much of this in a church, as to render it certain, that if he were to hear and answer their prayers, they would take the glory to themselves, and become boastful, dogmatical, and despisers of others. This is a great and powerful engine of satan, with which he destroys a multitude of souls.

Finally, for the unlooked for length of this communication admonishes me to stop. A hard and driving manner of address is an evil which has its weight, and may deserve a moment's consideration. The perfect model of all good and faithful preaching, wept over the wickedest city that ever stood on earth; and the most successful apostle, said of some to whom he wrote, even weeping—they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. There was no sin in Moses' saying, "hear now ye rebels," except what lay in the temper and manner with which he said it. Are not too many good men of the present day more like Moses in this respect, than they should be? An impenitent sinner may be *braced* against instruction and warning by a look, or a tone of voice, or a hard sentence, as well as any thing else; and when this is done, further efforts are commonly without any avail. It is worthy of serious inquiry, whether there are unaffected tears enough mingled with the prayers and sermons of ministers, the exhortations, intreaties and warnings of christians?

I shall now ask the privilege to make a short address to my fellow christians.

Dear Brethren—Are any or all the causes above mentioned, which hinder a Revival of religion existing and producing an influence among you. Pause and review, I intreat you, these causes, and answer the question now proposed, as in the presence of God. Is there any contention among you? If so, are you not straitened in your own bowels? Do you not know what is the reason you have not a Revival of religion? And what possible use or enjoyment is there in the heart-burnings, and hard feelings which prevail among you? When you think of a contention as the guilty cause of destroying one soul, do you not feel that the whole world is not worth one serious quarrel? And is there nothing you can do to promote peace? Is there no point of interest, or right, or will, you can relinquish for this object? are you afraid of the triumphing of the wicked, if you should do this? Oh, would it not be better to bear all the taunts, and scoffs, and ridicule, and contempt, which wicked men can heap upon you, than be the means of prolonging for a single day a contention which you might settle? Can you not forgive?* Have you complied with the command of him who said, when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any.

Further, Is there a spirit of speculation among you? Are you not convinced that when this spirit prevails, the pride of the heart is gratified by the keenness of the intellect? How is it when ye come together? Has every one a psalm, a hymn with which his soul has been enlightened and comforted? Has every one an exhortation, stirring up the brethren to love and good works? Are your affections lively, and animated, and such as they should be? Is it possible, that the reason you are not blessed with a Revival is to be found in you?

Brethren, are you suffering your minister to preach plainly and fully the great truths of the gospel "without fear?" Are you assuring him, that whatever contempt he may incur by this course, or whatever he may suffer in any other way, you will be his friends and supporters? When he preaches the truth, are you putting it out of the the power of the world to say to him some of your church do not believe as you preach?—And when he declares the judgments of heaven against the vices of the world, are you forbidding the world to say, some of the church are as guilty as we are? If you cannot answer these questions in the affirmative, have you not reason to be startled at the question, whether the cause of there being no Revival in the place where you reside, is not found in you? Have your souls been melted with tenderness towards men, whose awful character—is, that they are enemies of God—and whose end is destruction, unless they repent? Have you spoken the truth to them in love? and left them, if not with a conviction that their hearts are totally opposed to God, yet at least, that yours are full of benevolence and kindness and compassion? Brethren look well to it.—Is the reason why there is no Revivals in the place of your residence to be found in you?

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* If some of the contributors to the Christian Magazine would give a thorough and scriptural view of the duty of forgiving injuries, it would gratify

A CONSTANT READER.

A Friend to Revivals.

SERMON—No. X.

THE UNREASONABLENESS OF WORLDLY ANXIETY.

MATTHEW VI. 31.—*Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

These words are found in that discourse of the Savior, which is commonly called his sermon on the mount. This is the longest of his public discourses, as they are recorded by the evangelists. It embraces a variety of important subjects, which apply to the character and conduct of men in all ages and nations. Yet he appears to have had, throughout this discourse, a special regard to the instruction and comfort of his true friends. For he begins the discourse by a description of their peculiar character and blessedness. Then he proceeds to illustrate and enforce their peculiar duties. He next explains the great doctrines and duties of religion, as they are contained in the divine law. And then he shows with what spirit and in what manner, his friends should perform their devotions. But after he had given the instructions, which have been mentioned, he employs a large portion of the discourse upon the subject, that is suggested in the words of our text. In this part of his discourse he offers a number of familiar and powerful considerations, against an anxious concern for temporal blessings. In view of these considerations, he urges upon his hearers, and in a special manner, upon his true friends, the words of our text. He says "Therefore, take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" From the meaning of the original and from the very nature of the subject we are prevented from supposing, that the Savior intended that no manner of thought or concern, was to be taken respecting the things he here mentioned. He meant to forbid those, whom he addressed, to be anxious and troubled about temporal blessings. The reasons, by which, in the context, he enforced the words of our text, appear to be, in some degree, peculiar to real christians. Hence we are lead, in the present discourse to consider this general observation—Christians ought not to be anxious respecting temporal blessings.

To illustrate this observation, it is proposed,

1. To show why christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings; and,

II. To show why they should not be anxious about such blessings. It is proposed,

I. To show why christians are

liable to be anxious about temporal blessings.

If they were not liable to be anxious about such blessings, the Savior would not have used so many arguments, as he urges in our context, against such a spirit of anxiety. But it appears probable, from experience and observation, as well as from the Savior's instructions, that there is no evil, in which real christians, generally, are more liable to indulge themselves than an anxious concern about temporal blessings. And there are several considerations, by which they are induced to fall into this evil.

1. They are liable to become anxious about such blessings from seeing the temporal prosperity of worldly people. Christians are placed among the people of the world, who have their portion in this life. Though worldly people are not always prosperous in their pursuits, yet they are more commonly indulged in earthly riches, honors and pleasures than the people of God. While the people of God are witnesses of their designs, exertions, possessions and enjoyments, they are greatly tempted to imbibe their spirit and to become anxious for those temporal blessings, which they see so generally and bountifully bestowed upon the ungodly. The psalmist penitently confesses, that he was envious and anxious, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked.—Against this occasion of worldly anxiety God cautions his people. He says—"Fret not thyself because of evil doers; neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. Fret not thyself because of him, who prospereth in his way, because of the man, who bringeth wicked devices to pass." The people of the world allow themselves to form and practice such devices to acquire temporal blessings, as pious persons are unwilling to adopt. In view of the worldly designs, exertions and prosperity of sinners, they are very liable to be troubled and anxious respecting their own temporal concerns.

2. Christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings from their constant need of these blessings. Though they are apt to desire a greater portion of temporal blessings, than they really need, or would use in a proper manner, yet they do need many favors to supply their constant and numerous necessities. And when they consider how much they do need and shall need, as long as they live, they are apt to be troubled and to be anxious, saying—"What shall we eat and what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?"—They sometimes find themselves needy and destitute of such blessings, as are necessary for the comfort and support of their lives. And in such a state of constant want, they cannot be ignorant nor insensible of their situation. And they are very apt to be careful and troubled about the many

things they need; and to be thoughtful and anxious about the supply of their constant and numerous necessities.

3. Christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings, because, very often, they can see no way to obtain the favors they need. Sometimes their former sources fail; and they know not what way to turn, nor where to look for the supply of their necessities. Sometimes their necessities are greatly increased, without any increase of their resources. Many pious persons have been reduced to the most straitened and needy circumstances; and yet they have been unable to see from one day to another how they could obtain their daily bread. In such straits they are very liable to be anxious and to think they have good reasons to be troubled respecting their temporal affairs. But if they are subjected to no present suffering, in respect to temporal blessings,they are apt to indulge an enquiring and anxious spirit respecting futurity, when they can see no way to supply their future and expected necessities. Their anxiety is apt to arise and increase, as favorable appearances and prospects lessen or cease. Again,

4. Christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings, as they are disposed, through unbelief to be distrustful of divine providence. When their hearts are fixed, trusting in God, they leave all their concerns in his hands.—And they can then say—"The Lord is our shepherd; we shall not want." But if their faith subsides and their hearts turn from God, they become troubled and anxious about every object, by which they are affected. And as they are very liable to decline from God in their hearts, they are in danger of falling into a distrustful spirit. Then they are anxious respecting temporal blessings.—This spirit of unbelief and distrust is the real foundation of all sinful anxiety in christians. And so long as they are liable to distrust divine providence, they will be equally liable to be anxious about temporal blessings.

It is now proposed,

II. To show why christians should not be anxious about temporal blessings. The Savior uses a number of arguments, in our context, to persuade his people against the indulgence of an anxious spirit. And we need look no farther, than what he says on this subject, for reasons that should induce christians not to be anxious about temporal blessings. As one reason against their being anxious, he intimates,

1. That by being anxious they would be like those, who are wholly destitute of religion. Having spoken the words of our text, he adds, "For after all these things do the gentiles seek." The nations, whom he calls the gentiles, were then in heathenish darkness and wickedness. They were without the knowledge and

favor of the true God. Their chief concern and pursuit extended no father than to temporal blessings. For the children of God to resemble persons of such a character, would be very displeasing to their Father in heaven, and very injurious to themselves. And it is at present an important reason against worldly anxiety in christians, that the people of the world are anxious about the objects of time and sense. To be conformed to the world in this respect, is inconsistent with their character, profession and privileges. If christians would show, that they differ from worldly people, they must not be anxious about worldly things. But if like the world, they are anxious about these things, they dishonor their heavenly Father and act unworthy of their holy profession. It may be observed,

2. As another reason against worldly anxiety in christians, the Savior declares that their heavenly Father knows that they need temporal blessings. He says—"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." By his knowing what they need, is meant that he considers and regards their necessities. He constantly sees what they need; and he feels a lively and tender interest in their circumstances. While God is so concerned for his people, they ought not to be troubled and anxious about temporal blessings, but should cast all their cares on him. When christians consider the character of God, and their relation to him, they are contented and satisfied in believing that he considers what they need, and is properly affected by their necessities.

3. As another reason against worldly anxiety, the Savior directs his disciples to consider the providence of God towards inferior creatures. From what God does in feeding the fowls of the air, and in clothing the grass of the field, he shows they have no reason to be distrustful respecting his providing for their temporal necessities. He says, "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.—Are ye not much better than they?" Again he says, "Why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lillies of the field; how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is; and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" After giving such instruction, well might the Savior say, "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

4. As another reason against worldly anxiety, the Savior intimates, that it can produce no

good effect. He says, "Which of you by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?" To these words, according to Luke, the Savior adds this question—"If ye then be not able to do that thing, which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" Worldly anxiety never removes nor lessens a person's necessities; but it prevents him from enjoying what he has, and unfits him for receiving what he needs. An anxious spirit about worldly concerns and temporal enjoyments, is perfectly unreasonable, as it is totally ineffectual.

5. An anxious spirit about temporal blessings withdraws the attention and the affections from spiritual objects. This consideration the Savior offers, in our context, as another reason against worldly anxiety. He says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt; and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The cares of this life, the Savior mentions, in explaining the parable of the sower, as one of the causes, that choke the word, and render the hearers of the gospel unfruitful. While persons are anxious about temporal concerns, they bring leanness into their souls. But spiritual interests and enjoyments are more excellent and important than temporal. For this reason christians should set their hearts upon heavenly objects and not be anxious about earthly things.—Again,

6. Anxiety about temporal blessings is inconsistent with the service, which christians owe to God. They are required and are bound to devote themselves to his service, and give him the first and highest place in their affections and exertions. But they always turn their hearts from God, when they become anxious about themselves and the temporal blessings they need. This consideration the Savior also urges against an anxious spirit. He says—"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." He then adds, "Therefore, I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." An anxious and selfish spirit hinders worldly people from becoming religious. It also prevents christians, so far as it prevails, from being faithful and joyful in the service of God.—Christians cannot serve God, while they allow themselves to be anxious concerning their own temporal necessities. Besides,

7. Christians should not be anxious about temporal blessings, because the kingdom of God should

engage their first and highest attention. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," is the requirement of the Savior, in connection with the prohibition, that is given in our text. The enlargement and prosperity of the kingdom of God on earth, call for the constant attention and vigorous exertions of his people. To turn from this great and noble object to their temporal necessities is very unwise and sinful. Their very prayers forbid an anxious spirit about temporal objects. For they are taught to pray, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." According to these petitions should always be the feelings of their hearts and the actions of their lives. But such petitions are inconsistent with such a spirit, as leads a person to indulge anxious thoughts about his own temporal necessities. Let christians feel and act, as they ought in respect to the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom; and they will not be careful and troubled about the vain and transient objects of this world. Once more,

8. God promises to christians, who are faithful and obedient to him, all the temporal blessings they may need. In our context, the Savior says—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." And God makes many promises of the temporal blessings, which they may need, to his people in various parts of the holy scriptures. They ought to take his word, as the foundation of their confidence and to cast all their cares upon him. But as a distrustful and anxious spirit rejects and opposes the kind and gracious promises of God, it is highly sinful and offensive. The character, the conduct and the word of God, forbid and condemn an anxious spirit respecting temporal blessings.—It is, then, for the wisest and best reasons, that the Savior says in our text—"Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat; or what shall we drink; or wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If christians have no reason to be anxious about temporal blessings, then with a right spirit they will be very happy respecting these blessings. With such a spirit, they will be content with such things as they have; and will trust in God for what they may need. Being relieved and contented in respect to the things of this life, they will be prepared to perform the duties and enjoy the blessings of the gospel. And they will find that "godliness with contentment is great gain." With a right spirit a christian can say with the psalmist. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." If christians will only keep them-

selves from anxious thoughts and worldly cares, they may enjoy that godliness, which "is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

2. Christians may learn their spiritual condition by attending to their conduct respecting temporal blessings. They may determine whether they are advancing, or declining in religion. If they are advancing in religion, they are not careful and troubled about earthly things. They then find better objects than this world can afford, to employ their attention and affections. But as they become anxious about earthly things they turn from God and decline in respect to the duties and enjoyments of religion. If then christians would understand their spiritual condition, they should enquire and consider how they are affected in respect to the interests and concerns of this life.

3. From what has been said, we may conclude, that there are good reasons why God places many of his people in needy circumstances respecting temporal blessings. Many christians are very needy and destitute in respect to the things of this life. Such a state serves to try their hearts.—Such trials are suited to show christians to themselves and afford an high degree of comfort and joy in the evidence of their love and friendship to God. Constant poverty leads christians to trust in divine providence for temporal blessings. Such trust in God is far more safe and happy, than confidence in abundance of worldly possessions and enjoyments. Poverty promotes in christians their enjoyment of God in temporal blessings. They more highly enjoy God in what they receive, than what they would do, if they were not made sensible, by their poverty, of his providential care and kindness, and of their dependance upon him for the supply of their wants. The poverty of christians affords an opportunity for God to show his character, and express his love and kindness in providing and bestowing the blessings they need. Needy christians see more of God in the little they receive, than the rich can see in the abundance they possess. The poverty of many christians affords other christians an opportunity to follow the example of their heavenly Father in supplying the wants of their needy brethren. There are, then, wise and good reasons, why many christians should be placed in needy circumstances respecting temporal blessings.

4. If christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings, then a contented spirit respecting these blessings, is an eminent attainment in religion. Many persons doubtless suppose, they are contented, because they have never been severely tried; but have commonly been placed in easy and pleasant circumstances. Some persons may be easy in their feelings about temporal blessings from a

careless, and thoughtless, and slothful temper. But a spirit of christian contentment, which arises from confidence and obedience towards God, never exists in any person, who is not truly pious, and who has not made a pleasing progress in the divine life. The apostle thought it worthy to be mentioned, as an important attainment, that he had learnt to be content. He says, "For I have learnt, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: Every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Such a spirit of contentment, as the apostle here describes, never exists in any christians, who have not long been in the school of Christ, and been teachable and obedient scholars.

5. If christians have no reason to be anxious about temporal blessings, then they, who are not christians, have no reason to neglect religion on account of their temporal concerns. They do constantly neglect religion. And they commonly and chiefly neglect it on account of their anxiety and engagedness in respect to their temporal interests and pursuits. These concerns they suppose afford urgent and sufficient reasons for disregarding their Creator and the interests of their own souls. But nothing is gained, but much is lost in respect to this life, by neglecting religion. By becoming truly religious, a person's condition in respect to temporal blessings is much better, than it can be, while irreligious. They, therefore, who are not religious, have not the least reason for neglecting religion on account of their temporal concerns.

6. Since God is so concerned to supply christians with temporal blessings, they should be careful to use those blessings to his glory. They should see and confess his kind and gracious providence in their temporal enjoyments. The instructions, which God gave to his ancient people respecting their temporal possessions and enjoyments, ought now to be seriously considered and regarded by every person. He said by Moses, "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware, that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments and his judgments and his statutes, which I command thee this day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God. And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of my own hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt re-

member the Lord thy God."—They, who enjoy temporal prosperity, are very apt to forget God and to disregard his glory in using the blessings they have received from his hand. But they ought to be sensible of their entire dependance upon God for all their possessions and enjoyments. And they should be careful to use their temporal blessings with a frugal, thankful and obedient spirit.

IN WHAT SENSE DOES GOD DESIRE THE SALVATION OF ALL MEN ?

This question takes it for granted, that God *does* desire the salvation of all men. A truth so plain as this, and so readily admitted by almost every reflecting mind, scarcely needs a formal proof.—The fact that God is *benevolent*, that he has given his Son to die as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, that he freely *offers* salvation to all upon condition of their repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that he has given his Holy Spirit to strive with those who reject, as well as with those who embrace the gospel, that he has invited, entreated, and besought sinners of every description to accept of his offered mercy and live, is certainly enough to convince every candid person, that God desires the salvation of all men. But the question before us is, " In what *sense* does he desire this ? To give a plain and satisfactory answer to the question here stated, is the object of this paper. And,

1. We are not to understand from the fact that God, desires the salvation of all men, that he is *determined* to save them all. Many have supposed, from the desires which God has manifested on this subject, that he has determined to save all ; and of consequence all will be saved. But *we*, in thousands of instances, do not determine to accomplish things, which on some accounts, would be desirable ; and in thousands of other instances, we determine upon things, which on some accounts are undesirable. And for ought that appears, higher orders of beings may often find it necessary to do the same. It cannot therefore be inferred, from the *desires* of the Supreme Being that all mankind should be converted and saved, that he has determined to save them all ; and especially is such an inference inadmissible, since he has clearly revealed in the scriptures determinations of a different kind. He has there assured us in the plainest terms, that *all mankind are not to be saved.* The wicked will, at death, be " driven away in their wickedness"—they will come forth, in the last day " to the resurrection of damnation"—at the final judgment, they will " go away into everlasting punishment," where " the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and where " the smoke of their torment ascendeth up, forever and ever"—But if

such is to be the end of a certain portion of our race, then God has not determined to save them all; although, as we have seen, the salvation of all must be to him in some sense desirable.

2. When it is said that God desires the salvation of all men, we are not to understand that he desires this, *on the whole*. Many who have no faith in the doctrine that God has *determined* to save all men, still regard him as desiring—not only in itself considered, but *on the whole*—that all should be saved. "He desires the salvation of all," it is said, "*if they will repent*; although for wise reasons, he declines exerting his sovereign power in bringing them to repentance." This is the same as to say, that he desires, on the whole, that all should repent and be saved. To this view of the subject, which is at present a popular and prevalent one, there are to me insuperable objections; some of which I shall proceed to state. And first,

It goes to shew, that the general plan of government, which God is at present pursuing, is not the best which might be pursued. It holds forth another plan, which, to say the least, is equally as good, and with which the Deity could be equally well pleased. This is, that all should come to repentance, and be saved. This, would his rebellious creatures only consent to it, he desires, on the whole; and it is only because they will not consent, that he has recourse to the plan which is actually going into effect. Obviously, therefore, the view I am opposing, represents the present plan of divine administration, not as the best which could have been devised, or as that which God on the whole preferred; but as a kind of last resort, to which he had recourse, because he could accomplish his object in no other way. However this mode of representing the subject may seem to others; to me, I must acknowledge, it appears absurd, and is painful in the extreme.

In the second place, If God desires, on the whole, that all should repent and be saved,; then it is impossible to assign any satisfactory reason, why he does not exert his power, and bring all to repentance. It will not be pretended, by those who adopt the sentiment I here oppose, that God cannot convert sinners, without destroying their freedom; for they admit that he does convert all who are saved, in perfect consistency with their freedom. If then he desires, on the whole, that all men should be saved; if he can promote his own brightest glory and the greatest good, in saving all, as well as in any other way, and if he can bring them to repentance, in perfect consistency with their freedom; why, I ask, are any lost? Why does he not accomplish his desires, and glorify himself, in saving all? The everlasting sin and misery of millions of our race, is certainly, in itself, a great evil

—unspeakably great; and the only consideration, by which the benevolent heart can be reconciled to it, is, that it is an evil without which, the highest glory of God, and the great good, could not be promoted. But by the sentiment now under consideration, this only method of becoming relieved of the difficulty is taken away. The highest glory of God, and the greatest good, can be promoted, it appears, in the salvation of all men, equally as well as they are at present. Why then, I ask again, are not all saved? Why has infinite benevolence adopted a plan, involving the eternal ruin of millions of creatures, if he might have glorified himself, and promoted every desirable purpose of his government, equally as well, in some other way.

Again, The idea that God desires, on the whole, the salvation of all men, is inconsistent with various and numerous representations of scripture. It is inconsistent with those passages which represent him as appointing a certain portion of our race, to be "the vessels of his wrath." "Who stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed." "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." And the Supreme Being is represented in the scriptures, not only as appointing a certain portion of men to sin and death; but as blinding their minds, hardening their hearts, and preparing them for their final doom.—"Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor." "Whom he will, he hardeneth." "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted and healed."—"For this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth." And God is further represented in the scriptures not only as appointing a certain portion of our race to eternal death, and as blinding, hardening, and fitting them for it; but as so ordering events in providence as, in his own time, to cut them off, and complete their ruin. "It was of the Lord, to harden the hearts" of the Canaanites "to come against Israel, that he might destroy them utterly." The sons of Eli, "hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them." "And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab, king of Israel, that he may go up, and fall, at Ramoth Gilead." Whatever may be thought of these various passages, they certainly are in the bible; and whatever interpretation may be put upon them, they will remain, I think, in glaring inconsistency with the sentiment that God desires, on the whole, the salvation of all men, and that he can glorify himself, and promote the greatest good, as well in saving all, as in any other way. I now observe,

3. When God is represented as desiring the salvation of all men, we are to understand that he desires this, in itself considered.—There is scarcely any event which does not present a different aspect to us, when viewed as it is in itself, and when viewed in relation to other things. Thus, many things, which are in themselves desirable to us, when viewed in relation to other things, appear undesirable; and many others, which are in themselves undesirable, when viewed in their connections, appear desirable and important. The amputation of a mortally diseased limb—the taking of a loathed, dreaded medicine—and indeed, the doing of any thing, which causes us pain, whether in body or mind, must be in itself undesirable to us; still, how many such things appear desirable to us on the whole—are wisely determined on by us—and cheerfully accomplished. The distinction here referred to, so very obvious in human affairs, may safely be carried up to the Supreme Being. Most objects must appear to him very differently when viewed by themselves, and when viewed in relation to the infinite whole.—Thus, the afflictions of the present life, when viewed in themselves, are undesirable to the benevolent heart of the Deity. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Still, he sees it best on the whole that afflictions should be sent, and he determines to send them. So the final ruin of any of his creatures is, in itself considered, unwelcome to the creator. He desires, in this view, that all should be saved. Still he has seen it best, on the whole, that all should not be saved, and has adopted a plan, which in its ultimate developement, must complete the ruin of a portion of our race.

It is highly favorable to the view here given, that it represents the present plan of divine administration as decidedly the best one—as that which God in eternity preferred, and to the accomplishment of which, from the first he has uniformly adhered. He adopted it—not because man fell, and he wished to supply a remedy—nor because, when salvation was offered, all would not accede to the terms—nor because he foresaw, in eternity, that such would be the fact;—but because he originally and eternally preferred it—because he saw from the beginning that it was decidedly the best.—And the fall of angels and men; the promulgation of gospel offers, and their final rejection by a portion of our race; and indeed all the sin, and all the misery, which ever was, or will be, in the universe, so far from thwarting or defeating this plan, are themselves a fulfilment of its essential parts.—On this infinite and glorious plan of government, in which all things are tending in the happiest manner towards the greatest general good, the heart of Deity has been uniformly set; and in accomplishing it, he is moulding the hearts, and directing all the changes and concerns of creatures, according to his pleasure. In perfect consistency with their freedom, and with all due regard to considerations of character and of justice, he is forming his vessels of mercy, and his vessels of wrath—he is melting and hardening, saving and destroying, as seemeth good in his sight. He is "working all things, according to the counsel of his own will."

And while the view we have given, thus leaves the great plan of Deity unchanged and glorious, it also leaves him at liberty to indulge and to express all the feelings of his benevolence, in respect to existing characters and events. He may feel the yearnings of a father towards his incorrigible and ruined enemies. He may say in respect to them, "How shall I give you up" He may affirm in the most solemn manner that he has no pleasure in their death.—He may invite and entreat them to turn and live. He may desire, in itself considered, and desire earnestly, that all should be saved. It is thus, that the view here given harmonizes all the various representations of scripture on the subject; and consequently it is entitled to be received as a part of that truth which has been revealed to us from heaven.

To the sentiment advanced in this paper, I know of but one objection which needs at present to be answered. It has been said, "If God desires the salvation of all, in itself considered merely, and not on the whole; then there can be no sincerity in the universal invitations of the gospel.

In answer to this objection it may be sufficient to say, that the universal invitations of the gospel were designed to *express* the good will which God bears to all men, and the desire which he feels for their salvation in itself considered. If it is a fact, that he feels a very strong and ardent desire for the salvation of all men in itself considered, at the same time, that he, from a regard to the greater good which will accrue to the universe from the punishment of some, determines that all shall not be saved, it is highly proper and important that he should express it. It is as important that this feeling of his should be expressed, as it is that his true character should be known; for, this concealed, his true character could not be known. But there is no conceivable way in which God's benevolence to all men, his desire that they may be saved, and his unwillingness that any should perish, could be expressed, when some are actually lost, but by his providing a Savior for all, his making offers of pardon to all, and his inviting, entreating and cammanding all to accept them. These provisions and invitations of the gospel as clearly and forcibly express his tender and benevolent regard to every individual of the human race, as his purposes do his regard to the general good.

THE ORPHAN.

Returning a few weeks since, from a tour west of the Hudson, I took my seat at one of the principal towns in Connecticut, in the stage for Boston. It was a fine October morning. The twinkling stars were yet visible in the firmament, though shorn of their lustre by the advances of the grey twilight which was gradually extinguishing these wakeful luminaries of the night. The busy hum of the city was still, and the rattling of the stage-coach through the streets, was succeeded by a silence, as deep as it had broken, except where was heard the barking of the dog,whose slumbers have been disturbed by our passing, or the shrill voice of the cock, as he announced approaching day.

Among the companions of my journey, who were summoned thus early to their seats,was a young female, clad in habiliments of deep mourning. She was conducted to the stage by two of her friends,who expressed much anxiety, about the effect of her ride upon her feeble health.

Whether it was that the first dawn of the morning was more a novelty to me than to my companions or whether they had enjoyed less of the repose of night, than myself, I cannot decide. But the fact is, most of them soon fell into a sleep as profound as the roughness of the road would permit, while an interesting train of thought preserved my own mind wakeful and active.

Thus, said I, (as I saw the shades of night gradually giving place to the rays of the morning) thus will come the brightness of that day, when moral darkness shall be chased from our earth, and the sun of righteousness arise in his glory.—Thus, perhaps, the enraptured spirit, as it emerges from the dark valley of the shadow of death, will perceive the gradual unfolding of those splendours, the full view of which would overpower its yet feeble vision.

Meanwhile the sun ascended the horizon and afforded me an opportunity of viewing more distinctly my companions in the stage. My attention was turned particularly to the one I have mentioned.—The rose of health had faded from her cheek and the hectic flush, which sometimes arose in its stead, afforded no relief to the apprehensions with which, her pale countenance, and feeble frame were contemplated.

On arriving at our breakfast house, she was conducted to a room, where she might rest from her fatigue till we wére summoned to resume our journey. The sun had advanced considerably in his course; the morning was delightful; and the whole scenery calculated to enliven and animate the feelings. I endeavoured to cheer the mind of my feeble fellow-traveller, by directing it to the interesting objects which were presented to our view. But it was in vain. She seemed uninterested, alike in the beauties of nature, and of art, and in every subject I could propose, and disposed to be silent, as far as with propriety she might. Yet her's was not the silence of a vacant mind. There was an expression of intelligence in her countenance which had survived the wastings of disease, and which gave an interest to her appearance when the glow of health had departed. Her mind was evidently upon some yet untouched subject—There was a deep thoughtfulness in her countenance, which convinced me that the memory of some severe affliction possessed her soul, and at the same time a serenity which said, that her's were not feelings of unmingled sorrow. I felt a desire to know the history of the mourning stranger, but the subject was too delicate for direct enquiry and I suppressed my curiosity. As we approached the termination of her ride, I asked her if she was going to her parents. "I have no parents" she replied, "I am an orphan." I soon perceived that I had touched upon the subject which occupied all her thoughts, and that on this she conversed freely. From the little sketch which she voluntarily gave me of her situation, I learned that a few months previous, her father, her mother, her brother and sister; the only members of the family older than herself, had within five weeks of each other been all laid in the grave.

Her surviving sister, younger than she, had been taken into the family of the minister of the parish, to whose little flock the deceased belonged. She had resided mostly in the city, which we left in the morning, and was now returning to her guardian and friends, on account of her failing health. The stage here turned from the main road, to accommodate one of the passengers, and brought us close along by the village church-yard. The emotions of her mind were visible in her countenance, and a tear involuntarily rose in her eye, as this resting place for our mortality met her view. "There," said she, pointing to a distant part of the grave yard, where four dark marbles stood close together, "are my parents, my brother, and my sister."

The emotions produced by the first prospect of these habitations of the dead, passed away with the moment, for it was attended by no new feeling. Her mind was accustomed to dwell on these subjects, and its usual serenity was soon restored. When her parents were buried she was herself dangerously sick, and without any hope that she should be happy after death. Her afflictions had been the means, in the hand of God, of weaning her affections from this world, and fixing them on things above. She thought and spoke of following her departed relatives to the world of spirits, with the utmost composure of feeling. She contemplated her waning health without anxiety, for she hoped, though her sun of life was prematurely setting, that when its last ray was extinguished, the light of her Redeemer's countenance would be lifted upon her. When she spoke of her obligations of gratitude to *him* who had preserved her during her former sickness, when so many of her companions were called suddenly to give up their account* and had now given her a hope through his grace, that when the mantle of the grave was drawn around her, she should rest with her pious mother and sister in the world of peace; her feelings were too strong for utterance. She attempted to express them, but her heart was too full for words. The tear of gratitude rose in her eyes. She was silent.—In a few moments we entered the village where her guardian resided. As we passed along the street, where but a few months since the destroying angel had taken his desolating course, she pointed out the spot where her early youth was spent, the late dwelling of her parents—now no longer her home.

The stage was now at the door. A venerable looking matron, and two younger females, of interesting appearance, came to receive her. The solicitude which they manifested for her health, and the unfeigned pleasure which they expressed, more by actions than words, at seeing her again with them, convinced me, that though an orphan, she was not a friendless one. The storm of adversity had indeed beaten violently upon her; it had swept away the protectors, and the companions of her youth; and was apparently fast sweeping away the frail foundation, on which her mortal life was resting. Yet, when I saw how meekly she bowed before the blast which had withered her earthly enjoyments, and clouded all those flattering prospects, which rise in bright and joyous succession in the youthful mind, I could not but exclaim, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

As I pursued my journey, meditating upon the incidents of the morning, I was struck with the different effect, produced by similar events, upon different minds. I had seen afflictions, numerous and deep as those visited upon this unrepining orphan, where the subjects of them gave vent to their feelings in rebellious murmurings against the hand that chastened them, or repressed them in the sullen gloom of melancholy. Others I had seen, who appeared, whilst under the influence of some sore bereavement, to have their hearts softened a little, whose serious feeling all vanished with the affliction which produced it, and left them farther from God, than they were before. Others, like the subject of this little sketch, seem to view the finger of a gracious God in the sorrows of their lives, and are induced, by feeling his afflicting hand, to return to him from whom they have revolted. But the number of these *is small.* To you who have felt the bereaving strokes of providence, I appeal for the truth of this remark. Have *you*, when some temporal object of your affections has been torn from your embrace, fixed your affections upon eternal things? When deprived of some *created* blessing, have you looked more humbly and earnestly to the *Creator*, for support and consolation? Has no repining spirit corroded your feelings, and prevented the good which you might have derived from these events? My attention has, for years, been directed to the effect of the providence of God upon the moral character of his creatures. Yet I have found but *few* who appeared to feel so deeply, so sincerely, the words of the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," as did this pious orphan. Christian reader; had you witnessed the mild, submissive manner, in which she sustained her complicated afflictions, you would have felt with me, that it was better to be a companion of those who mourn, than of those who rejoice; and, would perhaps have felt with me, that you had found in this afflicted, yet unrepining orphan, an example of christian submission and fortitude, worthy of your own imitation. XANTHUS.

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* An epidemic prevailed in the village where she resided, which swept off in a few weeks, between 30 and 40 of the inhabitants.

Messrs. Editors,

As your Magazine is designed to communicate religious truth, at least, your views of it, I wish that you, or your correspondents, would throw some light on the subject of the claims and assertions advanced by one denomination of christians which serve to perplex, and, and I fear, to mislead the minds of many. In order to bring definitely, before you what I have in view, I will propose several questions:

1. Is salvation sure to all those who are members of the Episcopal church, and receive the sacrament from the hands of her clergy?

2. Must all those, where the gospel is preached, who are not of that church and do not receive the sacrament from the hands of what is called a regular and valid clergy, perish?

3. Is Episcopalian ordination the only regular and valid ordina-

tion; and are the ordination and ministrations of the Presbyterian and Congregational clergy irregular and invalid, and not of the christian priesthood?

4. Is the Episcopal church the only one in covenant with God, and are all other churches without hope and without God in the world, and aliens from the christian commonwealth, and out of the covenant of promise? Have they no communion with Christ?

I wish these, or such like questions, were satisfactorily answered. You may be surprised that I ask them; but the claims and assertions which I have mentioned, and the effect they have on the minds of many well meaning people, must be my apology. If my minister is not ordained, and if all his ministrations are invalid and nothing; and if the church to which I belong, is no church of Christ, but a schismatic body, it is important that I and all concerned, should know it. An essential service may be done to the christian community by proper answers to the questions I have proposed. In the light of truth, I, and others may see light.

Yours, &c.

A member of a Congregationalist Church.

QUESTION.

How can it be accounted for that many persons seem to desire religion, who exhibit no evidence of possessing it?

EXTRACTS.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR.

AN ALLEGORY.

It is recorded in a very ancient book, that a certain nobleman of great possessions being about to journey, called together his servants, delivered to them his goods, and said unto each, "occupy till I come."

Of these servants it is observed, that by birth, they were the property of their master, but having fallen into captivity they had been bought also with a price, in addition to which, every one of them said "I love my master," and by significant tokens had engaged to serve him during life. They would hold, they said, no separate property, or be influenced to serve by mercenary motives.—Their master's interest, they said should be their own, his reputation their honor, his prosperity their reward.

Thus circumstanced, it would be natural to expect of these servants, great "diligence in business," great friendship among themselves, and great joy as their master's interest should prosper in their hands; and this for a season was to a great extent the fact, though not without some painful exceptions, which it falls to our lot to record. There were servants who evidently pursued interests separate from their master's, and to his injury. The hedge about their master's vineyard was broken down, and the boar from the wilderness without molestation rooted up the vine. The door of the sheepfold too was left open, and the grievious wolf came in not sparing the flock. When such events happened however, it was common for the servants to become indignant at the boar and the wolf, not reflecting that had the fence of the vineyard, and the door of the sheepfold been kept, the vines and the lambs had escaped injury. It must be added, that the ground also was often so imperfectly tilled as to yield but a scanty harvest, and sometimes from year to year, no harvest at all. But in this case it was common for the servants to console themselves with the reflection, that God only could give the increase, and that as he gives or withholds according to his sovereign good pleasure, no blame could justly attach to them.— There were indeed a few instances of failure, where all the means of securing a crop had apparently been faithfully applied. But it often happened that those who in this manner went forth, from year to year, weeping, bearing precious seed, came again at length rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them; and where this was not the case, it frequently happened that the seed though buried long in dust, sprang up in a joyful harvest after the hand that sowed it, and the eye that wept over it, were at rest in the grave.

It was left in charge by the nobleman to his servants, that they should keep in good repair those parts of the farm which had been reduced to cultivation, and urge on the work of subduing the wilderness, until the entire farm should become one fruitful field; and so vigorous at first was the onset upon the wilderness, that it seemed as if every tree of the forest would bow, and every acre of the farm be made to feel the plough, and to wave with harvests. But so much at length did the love of these servants wax cold, and their enterprise abate, that the wilderness regained much of its lost dominion, and all hope and all duty seemed to be limited to the defence of the fruitful fields, against the encroachments of the wilderness.

When at length a small number of servants, moved by primitive affection and zeal, read their master's direction, 'go ye out into all parts of the farm and subdue the wilderness,' and began to make experiments, they were stared upon as madmen. Do you believe, said one, that our master expected, or intended that we should subdue the entire farm? Never. His language is hyperbolical.— Another contended that the fruitful field might as well give place to the wilderness, as the wilderness to the fruitful field. He could perceive very little difference, he said, between the wild animals of the wilderness, and the tame animals of the fields. God who made them all, is benevolent, and no respecter of persons, from which it must result, that they are all happy, and about equally happy; he thought it therefore a useless expense to carry the arts of husbandry to the wilderness; he could perceive but little difference between the lion and the wolf, and the ox and the lamb. All were made very good animals, each lived in his own way and why should we disturb them.

Others who thought it would be a very good thing, to subdue the wilderness were it *possible*, fainted at the thought of such an undertaking. There were trees, they said, somewhere in that wilderness, an hundred miles in circumference, harder than the hardest steel, and whose roots were wrapped about the centre of the earth, so that to cut them down, or pull them up, or raise crops under their shade, was alike hopeless. And then there were lions in the way of unusual strength and fierceness, ready to slay every man who should show himself in their dominions; and there too travellers had seen the giants, in comparison with whom they were grasshoppers. If it was suggested by any servant, that the field now cultivated, was once itself a wilderness, and that what had been done could be done again; it was answered, that the great trees which stood here were pulled up by miracles, and that the giants and lions were all killed by supernatural aid, not to be expected now.

If any pointed to tracts of wilderness recently subdued without miracles, as difficult of subjugation as any that remained, a new host of objectors took up the argument; admitted the *possibility* of subduing the wilderness, but denied that there was either time or resources. "It was as much as could be done," they said, "to maintain the cultivated field from the encroachments of the wilderness, and that charity begins at home. There were fences enough to be mended, and flocks to be gathered, and weeds to be eradicated at home, and nothing should be done abroad, until the farm at home was put in perfect order. Beside, where shall we find laborers for the whole field? And even were all the products of the cultivated part devoted to subduing the wilderness, it would be in vain:" forgetful that every newly cultivated acre poured into the treasury, thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold; and that the resources increased, as the work to be done diminished.

There was after all, another difficulty, which was, on which side of the wilderness they should begin; some preferring to assail the forests immediately contiguous, while others preferred going quite the other side. This difficulty was however settled by the amicable agreement, that both sides should be assailed at once, and the assault be continued until the servants should meet and shake hands in the middle.

In the ancient book already referred to, and which the nobleman deposited in the hands of the servants, there were rules which he directed them to follow in the management of the farm, forbidding them to make a single unauthorized experiment. In this book it was provided, that persons of competent skill in husbandry, who could exhibit evidences of friendship to their master, and would make the requisite engagements, might be received into the household of the nobleman; and for a season, those who offered themselves were carefully examined, and few were received, who did not consult in some good degree the interests of their master. But in process of time it came to pass, that from indolence or carelessness, or false tenderness, any person who offered himself was sure to be received, however deficient in skill, or wanting in the ordinary evidence of friendship to the nobleman.— The consequence was, that many servants unskilled in husbandry, and without friendship to the master, became members of his household. These, as might be expected, were extremely liberal in their views, and charitably disposed towards all those servants, whose deportment in better day would have ensured their expulsion from the household. If any servants proposed a more strict examination concerning skill, or industry, or friendship to their master, with reference to the admission of servants, they were denounced as uncharitable, bigoted and cruel. Does not charity, it would be said, *hope all things, and believe all things?* Do we know the candidate for admission to be a novice? Why then should we torment him by unreasonable suspicions, implied in his examination? They could not doubt that he had devoted himself *some where* faithfully to the acquisition of agricultural knowledge, and that he was, or would be, as industrious, and skilful, and faithful as themselves; and, as to friendship to the nobleman, "Is it not well known," they demanded, "that he had no enemies? It was *unreasonable* to think that he had, and if any pretended to be his enemies, or even conducted as if they were, undoubtedly they were deceived, or from modesty merely exhibited themselves as being worse than they were. Besides, friendship and enmity are feelings of the heart, and what have we to do with each other's hearts? To our own master we stand or fall."

If, at any time, attempts were made to expel from the household an idle or profligate servant, he would inquire the authority of the servants to do it, and cry persecution; when instantly, as if roused by fellow feeling, a host of sympathetic brethren would come to his aid to denounce his persecutors, and certify whom it might concern, of his pre-eminent industry, sincerity, and skill. In consequence of this state of things, the business of the farm, in many parts, was wretchedly conducted. Many a field was scarcely tilled at all, but was grown over to thorns, and nettles covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Some servants mingled tares with the good seed, and some sowed little besides tares.— At first indeed, it was done in the night, while men slept, but at length it was done openly. If any alledged that a particular servant sowed tares, it was replied, that tares and wheat were so nearly alike, that none should presume authoritively to discriminate between them. 'It had always been disputed,' they said 'which were tares, and which were wheat, and that every servant must judge for himself.' The accused thought that he sowed wheat, and his accusers thought that he sowed tares, and he was as likely to be right as they. Besides, it was all, they said, a matter of mere opinion, for which no man should be accountable. If their fellow servant had in fact sowed tares, he had done it, they did not doubt, sincerely, and of course would be as well accepted to their master, as those who sowed wheat. But after all, said they, of what consequence is it what seed a man sows, provided the harvest is good? What harm can there be in sowing tares, provided we reap wheat? or even if every seed produced after this kind, they could perceive no such mighty difference as to render it a matter of such consequence what seeds were sown. Among all the seeds sown upon the farm, they could not lay their finger upon more than two or three of much importance; and on the whole, they concluded, that tares sown sincerely, were even better than wheat sown hypocritically.

It was directed in the book of husbandry, that in the cultivation of fruit trees, particular attention should be paid to the root, but the same servants who thought that the tares sown sincerely, were better than wheat sown hypocritically, conceived the idea, that all attention to the roots of trees was entirely superfluous labour, that the root of the tree was dependent on the top, not the top upon the root; and that all a skillful husbandman had need to do, was to keep his trees well pruned. They talked, and wrote, and printed, and went about with great kindness, to open the eyes of other servants to the extreme folly of delving in the dirt about the roots of trees.— "For what," said they, "can be more beautiful than leaves and blossoms, or what more excellent than delicious fruit? Let the top of the tree (they said) be duly cultivated, and the luxuriant top, if roots be needful, will produce them." If any quoted that passage in the book of husbandry, which apostrophizing a tree says, "thou bearest not the root, but the root thee," it was easy to reply that the passage was mistranslated, and that it ought to be rendered as it does read in the original; thou bearest not he branches, but the branches thee.

Were it alledged, that where attention was paid to the roots ot trees, they were invariably the most flourishing and fruitful; the fact would be sometimes reluctantly admitted, while that the difference was caused by the different mode of culture, would be strenuously denied. "Prove to us," they would say, "that the difference does not arise from soil or position, or the cultivation which you bestow upon the top, in common with us; for as long as it is possible, that the difference may arise from some other cause, it is absolutely certain that it is not produced by your particular mode of cultivation."

Another charge left upon record in the book of husbandry, was, that the servants should take particular care of the sheep and lambs of the flock, to see that they were defended against the lion, who went about seeking to devour them. But those servants who dreaded so much labor of tilling the roots of trees, found the service of keeping the flock too laborious for pleasure, and by searching critically the book of husbandry, discoved to their great joy that there was no such animal as the lion; that the lion so often spoken of in the book of husbandry, as such a powerful and ferocious animal was nothing but the principle of evil personified, as it existed in the thunder storms and the diseases of sheep. It is well known, they said, that thunder storms roar, that they are noxious to lambs, and that they go about, figuratively seeking whom they may figuratively devour. When reminded that the book spoke of many lions, though of one as chief in strength and ferocity, it was easily to reply, that thunder storms were numerous, some great and some small; the greatest being called the old lion, and the rest lions, or young lions, according to their power. In like manner, they insisted, were the diseases of sheep personified, proceeding, as they all did, from principles of disease in the animal called the old lion, or the lion, or young lion, as the disease was more or less destructive.—These diseases, it was well known, caused sheep to bleat, which by a figure of speech, common in eastern countries, might be called *roaring*, and as disease and death decompose the bodies of animals, they are fitly compared to a lion tearing in pieces and devouring his prey. It is scarcely to be conceived how much rejoicing and self-complacency this discovery occasioned. The servants who made it and availed themselves of it, deemed themselves the most learned servants on the farm, and to express at once their estimation of themselves, and their contempt of the old fashioned servants, they styled themselves *rational husbandmen.* The irrational servants did in this case all to reclaim their fellow servants, which could be expected of men bereft of reason, or who had never had any. They demanded, how the principle of evil in diseases and thunder-storms, which was a reality, could possibly be illustrated by clothing it with the animated powers, and actions of an animal which did not exist. What sense could there be in calling a traitor a *Judas*, had no treacherous Judas existed; in calling a miser's heart, a heart of stone, if no such hard material, called a stone, had any being; and why call the principle of evil in disease and thunder, a lion, if there be no such living animal in the wilderness. Does not the calling of storms and diseases, lions, (said these simple-hearted servants,) prove the existence of real lions? Do the Greeks and eastern nations illustrate the power of thunder and disease by the properties and actions of non-existences? Do you find any examples of the kind in Homer, Sanchoniathon, Manetho, or the Talmuds? These questions, demanding time, in order to answer them learnedly, time was accordingly taken, when, after extended research, without being able to find an example in point, it was profoundly conjectured, that all the books, which authorised the illustration of the properties of real existences, by the properties and actions of nothing, were destroyed in Herculaneum, or burnt in the Alexandrian library.

BUNYAN.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN GUILT.

Would men compare themselves with God's law, instead of comparing themselves with their neighbours, they would make a very different estimate of their religious character from what they frequently do. There is a wide distinction we grant, between the man who has only indulged hated or impure desire in his *heart*, and the murderer or the adulterer; yet is the crime of the same *nature*—equally a breach of the Divine law, indicating a bad moral state of the soul, and showing an awful contrariety to the benevolence and purity of the divine nature. But where lives the man who hath not thus offended, and who hath not, therefore, in himself, a proof of his depravity, and an evidence of guilt, which should forcibly dictate to his lips the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Chr. Observer.

Omicron is received and will appear in a future number.

THE

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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ON THE DECREES OF GOD.

There is, perhaps, no doctrine of revelation more generally misunderstood, misrepresented and perverted, than that of divine decrees. But it is not a matter of indifference, how mankind view and treat this doctrine, which will deeply affect their characters and conditions forever. This shows the importance of examining the doctrine with attention and candour, that we may understand and embrace the truth respecting it.—The following remarks, designed to throw some light on this divine subject, are submitted to the reader's serious consideration.

1. The decrees of God are *eternal.* This conclusion results from his perfections, and is established by his word. The existence, to day, of any purpose that did not exist yesterday, necessarily implies a change in him whose purpose it is. But changeableness is an imperfection. Hence, as God is absolutely perfect, there can be no change in him. Accordingly, in his word, he is declared to be "The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," and "the same yesterday, and to day, and forever." The conclusion then is, that all his decrees are eternal, or that there never was a period when they did not exist in his own infinite mind. For to say that God has any decrees now, that he had not in some past period of duration, is the same as to say, that he is mutable and imperfect, which is contrary to his word and reproachful to his character. God represents his purposes, which he executes in time, as having been formed before time began, before the foundation of the world, or from everlasting. And speaking of his purpose of redemption, which includes all his works of creation and providence, he calls it "the *eternal* purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." No truths, indeed, are more plainly revealed and taught in God's word, than the immutability of his nature, and the eternity and immutability of his counsels.

2. The decrees of God are *universal.* The Westminster Assem-

bly say, "He hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass." This accords with reason and scripture. In eternity God concerted his great plan of operation, which comprises all things and events that ever did or ever will exist.—This must be true, if he is an all-perfect being. To say that God has not laid a plan of his own universe, and fixed and arranged all things in it, is virtually to pronounce him imperfect. For to undertake any work without a previous design, demonstrates the imbecility of the undertaker.—The man who does this, is charged with folly by his fellow men, and the charge is just. It must, then, be highly arrogant to impute such weakness and folly to the blessed God. It must be blasphemous to maintain that he acts without a plan, or that if he has one, it is not as extensive as his works, but leaves many things to some future arrangement, or rather leaves them buried in the depths of uncertainty. God is the universal designer. His purposes include all his own conduct, all the conduct of all his creatures, and all things and events in the universe. For an inspired apostle saith that "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;" and that he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." In these passages, the universality of his decrees, as well as of his agency in their execution, is taught with the utmost plainness.

3. The decrees of God are *unconditional.* The divine threatenings are conditional; but this is not true of any of the divine purposes. God threatened to destroy Nineveh, unless its inhabitants should repent. This condition, though not expressed, was implied, and was understood to be, both by Jonah and the Ninevites, as appears from their words and actions. The execution of the threatening depended on the conduct of the people, and in this sense the threatening was conditional. But though God threatened to overthrow the city in forty days, he had not decreed to overthrow it at that time, but to spare it. And this decree contained the means of its preservation, which were the repentance and amendment of the people.—Accordingly, they did repent, and the impending evil was averted. Here, both the end and the means necessary for its attainment, were included in the decree, which rendered it unconditional. The same holds true of all the decrees of God. Were he to fix on a certain end, without fixing on the means necessary to be used by others to bring it to pass, the end would be brought to pass, or it would not, according as those means should happen to be used or neglected. This would render the decree conditional, and its execution uncertain. But since the decrees of God are universal, or extend to all events, they include in every case, both the end, and the means necessary to secure it. And this makes them all uncondi-

tional. They insure the existence of all those second causes and instruments, which are requisite to the complete attainment of the great object that God has in view, in all his works. In this connection, it may be remarked, that the divine decrees being unconditional and unchangeable, will all be executed. Of this there is an absolute certainty. For he, who formed them, is both able and willing to execute them all. Although God's enemies mean not to act for him, but for themselves; yet he has them entirely under his control, and makes all their efforts to accomplish their own designs, subserve the accomplishment of his. He employed Pharoah, Sennacherib and Judas, as well as Moses, Isaiah and Paul, to execute his purposes. And he forever causes all his foes, as well as all his friends, to promote their execution. Nothing can ever defeat them. Hear what he himself saith on this subject, "The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand. I will work, and who shall let it? I will do all my pleasure." I add,

4. That the decrees of God are benevolent. "God is love." His whole heart is impartial love, is pure disinterested goodness. And all the counsels of his will, and all the operations of his hand necessarily harmonize with this his goodness. "He cannot deny himself." He cannot do any thing inconsistent with his moral rectitude. Hence, his decrees, which flow from his holy and benevolent heart, must be holy and benevolent decrees. The perfect, unchanging goodness of God always leads him to do all the good he can in time and eternity. And the same goodness led him from everlasting, to decree to do all this good. He formed all his decrees with an ultimate view to his own glory, which is the most noble and excellent end that he could choose and pursue. And in executing them, he will accomplish this end, he will make the brightest and most perfect displays of all the attributes and perfections of his nature, and thus insure the endless existence of the greatest possible sum of good in the immense empire over which he reigns.

The gospel reveals God's everlasting purposes, and represents him as making, through them, bright and glorious manifestations of himself to his intelligent creatures. To the Ephesians Paul writes, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the *eternal* purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Upon the whole, it is manifest that the decrees of God are most holy and benevolent; and that in executing them, he will display all his glory, and cause as much good, as much holiness and happiness to exist forever in the creation, as his infinite wisdom and goodness, clothed with omnipotent power, can produce.

1. It appears from the preceding remarks, that all objections to the decrees of God, are groundless. One grand objection often made to them is, that they deprive men of moral freedom, and turn them into machines. But this is manifestly untrue. Moral freedom consists in acting voluntarily or from choice in the view of motives. Now, mankind are conscious that they do thus act, and hence are conscious that they are free moral agents. A machine is something that neither thinks, nor reasons, nor wills, nor loves, nor hates, nor acts at all. It may, indeed, be moved by the application of external force; but is itself senseless, motionless, lifeless matter. Now, if it can be proved that the decrees of God do turn man into such a thing as this, then it may be proved that they destroy his moral freedom, and turn him into a machine. But what is the fact? Does not every person know from his own experience, that he is a percipient, rational being?—that he has thoughts and desires, and that he forms designs? that he loves and hates? and in short, that he acts voluntarily or as he chooses to act in view of motives? And does he not know, therefore, that he has as much moral freedom as he could possibly have, if no divine purpose had ever been formed respecting him? The truth is, that the decrees of God, instead of destroying, or in the least impairing men's freedom, do secure it. For to be the proper subjects of moral government, men must possess moral freedom. But God has made mankind the subjects of such government, and intends that they shall be the subjects of it as long as they exist.—It is therefore, one of his eternal purposes, that they shall be free forever. How false and absurd, then, is the objection to God's decrees, that they destroy human freedom, when they do in fact establish it and render it permanent and durable as the everlasting pillars of his throne! No less fallacious and absurd are all the objections that are ever brought against his decrees. For it has been shown that they are the genuine expressions of his boundless benevolence; that they are perfectly wise and good; and that they lie at the foundation of all those transcendent displays which he makes of his glory, and of all that blessedness which he creates and spreads through his holy king-

dom. Were mankind divested of selfishness, which is enmity to God, they would never object to his benevolent designs, but would contemplate them with high satisfaction and joy.

2. It appears from what has been said, that the doctrine of decrees is a doctrine according to godliness, or tends to promote good works. True, it is represented by its opposers, as having an immoral tendency; but the representation is incorrect. The sabbath is made, by the impious, an occasion of much wickedness. If there were no sabbath, the wicked could not be guilty of its profanation. But does it hence follow that the holy sabbath tends to immorality? So if Christ had not come into the world, the Jews and gentiles would not have been guilty of betraying and crucifying him. But who will hence conclude, that his appearance in the flesh, his mighty works, and his spotless life naturally led to the horrid crimes of treason, perjury, blasphemy and murder, which his enemies perpetrated at the time of his passion? There is no truth of revelation, but what may be perverted, and thus made the innocent occasion of great wickedness. Yet all the doctrines of the bible have a direct tendency to promote good works. This is as true of the doctrine of decrees, as of any other doctrine. If the decrees of God were wicked, they would tend to wickedness; but since they are good, they tend to goodness, they lead to the practice of virtue and piety. The doctrine of decrees, clearly exhibited, brings God sensibly near to men, and men sensibly near to God, and leads them to see him every where and in every thing, and to feel their entire and constant dependance upon him. It leads the righteous to deep self-abasement before God, to exalted thoughts of God, and to unshaken confidence, strong consolation, and holy joy in God. And it has encouraged and excited his children in all ages to pray, "Thy kingdom come," and to be workers together with him in the building up of Zion. These conclusions are supported by the concurrent testimony of scripture, observation, and experience. How greatly mistaken, then, are those who think and say this is a licentious doctrine, or at least a cold and dry speculation, tending to damp the flame of holy love in the hearts of christians, to diminish their desires after God, and to weaken their efforts in his cause! Enlightened christians do know that the very reverse of all this is true. Nor, unless they are exceedingly stupid, are they willing to have this great practical, comforting, animating doctrine concealed, or but barely named.—Whenever they are in a lively frame, they love to have it clearly and fully exhibited, in connection with all other truths of scripture, knowing that this is necessary to a faithful and successful declaration of all the counsel of God.

3. The doctrine of decrees is calculated to awaken, convince and convert sinners. Many do indeed maintain, that this doctrine tends to stupify the consciences of sinners, and to give them ease while pursuing their sinful courses. Now, it is true, that unless God pours out upon sinners the convincing and converting influences of his spirit, their hard hearts will grow harder, and their blind eyes blinder, under the preaching, not only of *some*, but *all* the doctrines of revelation.—There is nothing, however, in *any* of its doctrines, which is calculated to produce this effect; but it is wholly owing to the blinding, hardening nature of sin itself.—The doctrine of decrees, as well as all divine doctrines, although abused by sinners to the increase of their blindness and stupidity, does nevertheless naturally tend to their conviction and conversion. For whatever is calculated to promote the good work that is already begun in the hearts of saints, must have a favorable bearing towards the commencement of the same work in the hearts of sinners. But a plain and faithful exhibition of the doctrine of decrees, tends to promote the growth of holiness in the saints; and therefore it tends to bring sinners to repentance. According to God's word, they are awakened, convinced and converted by his Spirit, through his truth as the means.

But the doctrine of decrees is a part of that truth, a part of that word, which he declares "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is only while the wicked either disbelieve or banish from their thoughts the doctrine under consideration, that they can live in quiet and enjoy the pleasures of sin. The moment they are made to understand, believe and feel the truth in respect to this subject, the strong holds in which they entrenched themselves, crumble to dust; the false hopes, they cherished, vanish away; the bed of down on which they reposed, becomes a bed of thorns; and they awake from their dreams of security to fear, and remorse, and anguish.—For they perceive at once how completely the universal and unchanging decrees of God throw them and their immortal interests into his hand forever; which is to them a situation of all others the most alarming and painful. And is it not desirable that sinners should be alarmed and distressed? Is it not desirable that those who hate God and are in the way to everlasting death, should be convinced of the truth respecting their characters and prospects? Is there any reason to hope that they will ever be converted and saved, without being in some measure convinced of these things? It will, perhaps, be said after all, that the doctrine of decrees is discouraging to sinners. So it is, but not in the sense intended by those who use the phrase. This doctrine is calculated to discourage them from continuing any longer in sin, from taking another step in that path which is leading them to inevitable destruction. And is there any danger of making their sinful course too hard and comfortless? of throwing too many discouragements, too many obstacles in their path to ruin? Surely he who loves and would save their souls, will not spread their chosen path with roses, but will labor to plant it thick with briers and thorns, and hedge it up before them.

To close. It is the duty of ministers of the gospel to preach the doctrine of divine decress as plainly as possible, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. It is their duty to preach this great and important doctrine, because it is a doctrine of revelation, and because it is so happily calculated to promote the conviction and conversion of sinners, the sanctification of saints, the prosperity of Zion, and the glory of God. Nor can ministers be faithful to God and to the souls committed to their charge, if they neglect to preach it.

THEOPHILUS.

SERMON.--No. XI.

NUMBERS, XXIII. 25.--*And Balak said unto Balaam, neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.*

Balak was King of Moab. The most probable opinion respecting Balaam is, that he was a celebrated magician; but, had, by some means, acquired a knowledge of the true God. He was ambitious and covetous; and endeavoured to make his theoretical knowledge of God subservient to his selfish purposes. He appears to have prophesied in the name of Jehovah, and, thereby, to have obtained a celebrity, highly favorable to his sordid love of gain and honor. Thus, the exorcists, perceiving how efficacious the name of Jesus proved in the mouth of the apostle; attempted to cast out devils in the same name--adjuring them by Jesus, whom Paul preached, to come out. Thus Simon the sorcerer, finding the miracles of Philip, superior to the effects of his magic, professed christianity: and afterward, offered money to the apostles, "Saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

Balaam, no doubt, had mercenary motives, for prophesying and working wonders, for the apostle assures us, that he loved the wages of unrighteousness.--His being furnished with extraordinary powers is by no means, a singular case. God has ever conferred on wicked men such gifts as would answer his own wise and benevolent purpose. And not only Balaam may say, but, we are assured, that many will say, in the day of judgement, "Lord, Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works," to whom the Judge shall say, "I never knew you, Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Balak had heard of the fame of this man. He was greatly alarmed, when he saw the Israelites encamping on the plains of Moab. In this emergency, he sent messengers unto Balaam, to come and curse Israel. And the confidence, which he had in the malediction of Balaam, is thus expressed, "I wot, that he, whom thou blessest, is blessed; and he, whom thou cursest, is cursed." Balaam appears to have been sufficiently disposed to gratify Balak—to curse the people of God. He shifted from plan to plan—had altars erected, and sacrifices offered; but yet, he was restrained from cursing Israel—constrained to bless them. "How said he, shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied." When Balak expostulated, saying, "I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast blessed them altogether. Balaam made a virtue of necessity, and said, "Must I not take heed to speak that, which the Lord hath put into my mouth?" Still, however, he discovers a willingness to try every plan; every expedient, that he might obtain permission to curse Israel; but in vain. "Behold, said he, I have received commandment to bless, and He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." Balak finding that he could not obtain his object, addressed Balaam, as in the text. "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." He desired to have them cursed; but, as he could not have this desire gratified; he wished Balaam to take a neutral position. As he was not suffered to do any thing, which would injure Israel; Balak was desirous at least, that he would not do any thing to advance their prosperity. This last resort of Balak, to neutralize Balaam, has been, in every age, one of the most successful stratagems of the enemy of souls, against the church. Not all the curses of his agents, in the world, nor all the open force, which they have exerted, has tended to advance his kingdom, and retard the prosperity of Zion, so much, as their taking neutral ground, and labouring to form a coalition between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. The curse of Balaam would have been harmless, compared with the insidious advice, which he gave, to cast a stumbling block before Israel. So satan and his emissaries are by far, less dangerous foes, when they are open in their attacks; than, when concealed under the mask of friends. The church suffered less, from the curses of pagan Rome, and by ten bloody persecutions; than she, afterwards suffered, by receiving into her bosom, the myriads of lukewarm persons who would not, openly, curse her at all—

but yet, had no heart to bless her at all. The subject, accommodated to the state of the church, furnishes the following sentiment;

The cause of the adversary is subserved, by want of decision in favor of the leading truths and duties of christianity. We shall,

1. Endeavor to illustrate this sentiment, with respect to fundamental truths. The leading truths of the gospel are extremely important. They are, in fact, the foundation of experimental and practical godliness. The holy truths, contained in the scriptures, not only distinguish christianity from all other religions; but, from every counterfeit. Jesus came into the world, to bear witness unto the truth—was hated because he told the truth—prayed, "Father, sanctify them through thy truth;"—laid down his life, in support of the the truth. No intimation is given, in the bible, that it is unimportant, what men believe. On the other hand, the ministers of Christ have specific directions; "Preach the gospel"—"Preach the word." And hearers, also have directions, "To receive with meekness, the engrafted word." If truth had not been highly interesting; yea, essential to christianity, the Holy Ghost would not have denounced a curse on any man; or even, an angel from heaven, who should preach another gospel. Nor would he, by Jude, have directed his people, that, they should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints.—There can be no question, with those, who believe the scriptures, whether it is essential, that gospel truth should be propagated and received. The candid inquirer will meet with no difficulty, in ascertaining the leading truths of our holy religion. They are illustrated by facts—they are illustrated by objections, which have been answered by prophets, and apostles, and Jesus Christ himself. The holy doctrines of the cross, which must be propagated and received, in order to salvation, it may be expected, that the father of lies, in order to secure his kingdom will oppose.—And as men, in a state of nature, are his willing subjects, it is easy to account for the false systems of religion; yea, it is easy to account for the rejection of the bible itself, which is the fountain of truth. Such has been the fact, with respect to numbers, in every age. But, if the gospel was sent to bless the world, then a denial of it, either by rejecting the scriptures, in which it is contained; or, by making them speak another language, is a curse. The propagators themselves, are under the curse of God, and they are a curse to all who listen to them. They openly do for satan, what Balaam was afraid to do for Balak. They labor, directly, to establish the kingdom of darkness—they wage war against the King of Zion. Such, however, are not the most formidable enemies of the Church. The evi-

dences of the christian religion, are too numerous and too conclusive, to be overthrown by the sneers of infidels; and its leading doctrines too plainly revealed, to be rejected by those, who search the scripture. Persons, therefore, who explicitly deny the inspiration of scripture, are perceived at once, to be in the ranks of the enemy, and in opposition to the cross of Christ. It will be even so respecting those who openly oppose the fundamental truths revealed. But though much has been done by undisguised warfare, yet this has not been the most successful method of the adversary. He has effected much more by teaching his emissaries a temporizing policy. "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." Neither oppose divine revelation, nor favor it—neither oppose the distinguishing truths of the gospel, nor favor them.—Whether people believe that there is one God, or many Gods, or no God; say nothing for, nor against any of these schemes.—If it is believed that men by nature are wholly sinful, or partially sinful, or not at all sinful; let each enjoy his opinion. In a word, whether men believe that they can be saved in any other name, or no other name, but that of Christ; with holiness or without holiness; let them alone.—Religious sentiments are various. We know not which is right—whether any are right—or but that all are right. Neither favor any, nor oppose any—but strive to effect a brotherly intimacy between those who hold these and ten thousand other discordant sentiments. How easy it is to see, that taking the ground respecting doctrines, noticed above, would as completely subserve the purpose of the enemy of souls, as any which can be conceived. Liberality and charity of this kind, however popular, are directly calculated to support the empire of the prince of darkness. It is truth, plain distinguishing gospel truth, which makes sinners free. This is the grand means of their sanctification. Hence they are exhorted, "Receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls"—and hence, the Savior prayed, "Father, sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."—The principal ground of controversy between the world and the church, has been the adherence of the latter to gospel truth. Had the church given up this point, and taken the liberal ground, that the salvation of men is not affected by their belief, satan would have held the undivided empire of the world to this day. The fundamental truths of our holy religion must be believed, in order to affect the heart and influence the practice. So far as the light of gospel truth shines, it is blest in a greater or less degree, in dispelling the darkness of satan's kingdom, and saving souls. But, if little, or no distinction is made, between error and truth—if they are represented as leading to the same result; sinners will continue in the dark mazes of error, and perish—for, "They love darkness rather than light." It is as important, then, as the salvation of men's souls, that a pointed distinction should be maintained between the gospel system and every erroneous system. If the apostles had hearkened to the Jewish rulers, when they commanded them, "Not to speak, at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus," the triumphs of the cross would have ceased, and satan's subjects maintained their allegiance to *him*. We pass,

2. To illustrate our leading sentiment, with respect to the duties of our holy religion. With reference manifestly, both to doctrinal and practical subjects, Christ said "He that is not with me, is against me; and he, that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." The kingdom of Christ, and that of the adversary, are not only different, but diametrically opposite. We read of only the broad, and the narrow way; the one leading to destruction, the other, to life.—Hence the vast importance, of taking the right way, and walking circumspectly. The enemy of Christ and souls would fain have men advance with rapid strides, in the way to destruction—but, the master-stroke of infernal policy is, to keep them out of the narrow way, which leadeth to life. But, the sinner is explicitly directed, in scripture, what he must do to be saved; as well as what he must believe.

1. There must be a radical change of heart. Mankind are naturally in a state of sin, the willing subjects of the prince of darkness. It is their immediate duty to renounce this allegiance, and become the subjects of the Prince of peace. It is their duty, without delay, to love God; exercise all holy affections; in a word, to become new creatures. This great change, effected by the power of the Holy Ghost, satan and all his emissaries hate. Violent opposition to revivals of religion has been excited, and some have mocked, as they did on the day of Pentecost. Little, however, has been effected in this way. The Church is in much greater danger from temporizers, from those, who will not curse at all, nor bless at all. All may be considered of this description, who never say any thing against immediate attention to religion;—nor any thing for it. They leave sinners where they are, and alas! they are under the dominion of the arch-apostate. Not all the smooth harangues on the importance of decent behavior, moral honesty, and seeking to become religious, at some future time, will do their souls any good; but, on the other hand, aid them in strengthening the cords of their sins. There is no medium between a state of nature and a state of grace.

2. It is the duty of christians

to be exemplary in their lives.—They are placed in a conspicuous situation. "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." Christ commands, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven." The followers of Christ should be decided in the cause of righteousness. When the lives of professed christians are contemplated, is there not occasion for alarm?—Is there not reason to fear, that many lukewarm persons have intruded themselves into the Church? Yea, have not real christians cause to tremble? Are not many afraid, or ashamed to make a stand against prevailing vices? and do they not, by their timidity, embolden the wicked to continue in sin? If the professed followers of Christ do little to countenance virtue and godliness, and to discountenance vice and ungodliness; they do much to subserve the cause of the adversary.

3. It is the purpose of God to christianize the world. And he has pointed out the manner, in which, he will do it. The gospel must be preached, the holy scriptures must be distributed. Jesus gave commandment, on this subject, about 1800 years ago. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."—Every christian is under obligation to take an active part in this great enterprise. But, what has been done? The enemy of souls, as might have been expected, has brought his most destructive engine to bear on the subject.—"Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." It is not strange, that this suggestion should operate on the enemies of Jesus and his cause—that they should be led to talk of the present happy state of the heathen, and of their moral virtues; and to avow the sentiment, that it would be best to let them enjoy their own religion. But can it be, that this suggestion of the father of lies, has had an influence on christians? The state of facts evinces, that it has. Professed christians in every age, no doubt would have been willing, that benighted pagans should have had the gospel. But what have they done? Centuries have revolved, and scarcely any exertions have been made. Idle wishes and unmeaning prayers for the heathen have satisfied the greater part of christendom. And what has been the consequence? Millions and millions have perished for lack of vision! The cause of satan has been subserved by the criminal indifference of the christian world. This solemn consideration should arouse the church from her slumbers, and excite her to vigorous exertion.

4. Zion's enlargement and prosperity will be, in proportion, to the frequency and fervency of her children's prayers. It is highly interesting, therefore, that christians be much engaged in this holy duty. It never should be for-

gotten, that all the conquests, which the church obtains over her spiritual enemies, are given by Christ, her King. No means prove effectual to this end, without divine influences. And Jesus has said, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy spirit to them that ask him." It is a high privilege, then, as well as an imperious duty to pray to God, and especially, to ask for his spirit. Christians cannot be too frequent, too fervent, too importunate at the throne of grace. In proportion, therefore, as any yield to temptation to restrain prayer for the peace of Jerusalem; though they do not curse at all—give decisive evidence that they have no heart to bless at all. The spirit of our subject is manifestly attached to those, who, have not the spirit of prayer—by their neglect, they are subserving the cause of the adversary.

We close with the single remark. That those, who are undecided, respecting religion, may always be found in the enemy's camp. They make great pretension, it is true, to candour, charity, liberality and a desire to unite discordant parties; but, they are mere pretensions. Trace out such characters, and you will always find them siding with the world and plotting against the Church. Balaam had no better heart when he blest the Israelites, than if he had cursed them; and he was instrumental of far more extensive mischief, by his insidious counsel to Balak, than he could possibly have been, either, by blessing, or cursing. Thus it is with those who are not grounded and established in the christian faith. However liberal they may be with respect to every species of error; they are uniformly hostile to the truth as it is in Jesus. A union with them, on their terms, would be like the union of the Israelites with Moab, at their idolatrous feasts—and infinitely more destructive.

Omicron.

ERRORS IN PRINCIPLE MORE PERNICIOUS THAN ERRORS IN PRACTICE.

Principles are general truths from which other truths are derived. The first principles of every science and of every religion are few and generally simple; they form the root, from which others, like the trunk and the branches, originate. It is a first principle or general truth, that God is the Creator, and by consequence, the preserver and governor of the universe. This being granted, it follows, that all intelligent beings are dependant on God—that he has a sovereign right to give them laws, and that they are accountable to him for their conduct. But if we assume it as a first principle, that all things came into existence without a cause or are themselves the cause, it will follow that we are not thus accountable. Now an error in principle is meant the adopting that as a general truth, which is false. Paul assumed it as a first principle that Christ was an impostor; this general or first principle was false; but assuming it to be true, he verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus also the reception or rejection of any other fundamental doctrine of revelation draws after it a train of practical consequences. That the human heart is, in a moral sense, totally depraved, is a doctrine plain and easy to be understood; its meaning is simply that man, instead of loving the Lord his God, with all the heart and his neighbor as himself, loves himself supremely or is completely selfish. Yet upon the reception or rejection of this doctrine are built very different systems of religion. Admit total depravity and the declaration of scripture, that "the ploughing of the wicked is sin and his sacrifices are abomination," appears with clearness and consistency; for if the heart be totally selfish, the motives of the unregenerate, whether they plough or offer sacrifices are sinful. The admission or rejection of this fundamental doctrine may appear to be a small matter, which ought not to separate churches or professing christians: yet if this doctrine be given up, it will effect, in many respects, an entire change in our views of divine truth. Every man wishes to be consistent with himself, and therefore, if one fundamental doctrine or first principle be abandoned, another and another must be also abandoned, for their is no consistency between truth and error. Many believe that they have nothing to fear from the threatnings of everlasting punishment, which the scripture denounces against the finally impenitent, because all men will be saved. How do they arrive at this conclusion? In general, they do it by assuming it as a first principle that sin does not merit eternal punishment. With this assumption they conclude, those passages which assert their endless punishment must be understood in a figurative sense: for it would be the greatest cruelty to punish the sinner beyond the desert of his transgression. Hence has arisen a very great controversy in determining what the bible reveals. One man assumes that this, another that, that doctrine cannot be true. No matter, therefore, how plainly it is revealed; if it cannot be true, it must be false, and another meaning must be attached to those passages, in which it is revealed. The same difficulty would exist, if an angel should speak to man from heaven. Were an angel to reveal, that the finally impenitent shall go away into everlasting punishment, mankind would begin to inquire, What does he mean? Eternal misery cannot be his meaning; for this we know would be cruel and unjust. What then does he mean? Does he not mean that all shall be *finally saved?* Thus Paul in the face of Christ's ministry and miracles, was prepared to shut up the saints in prison and when they were put to death, to give his voice against them, because he had assumed it as a first piciple, that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor.

With this illustration of the nature of first principles and of their connection with practical consequences, I can now proceed to the main design of this communication, which is to show, that *Errors in principle are more pernicious than errors in practice.*

1. They are more difficult of detection. Errors in practice, when not the result of errors in principle, are committed against the united testimonies of reason and conscience; but errors in principle are never sincerely adopted until reason and conscience are engaged to support them.—Thus Paul verily thought, that he ought to shut up the saints in prison and when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them. Had Paul's been a practical error only, his own conscience would have testified against him; but being an error in principle, it was exceedingly difficult of detection. He really thought it his duty to shed their blood, and to compel them to blaspheme. We are aware of the great difficulty in persuading the heathen, that theirs is an idolatrous religion; before this can be accomplished an entire change must be effected in their views of truth. This difficulty proceeds from their errors, being errors in principle. The drunkard promises a speedy reformation: but the errorist in principle, although led to the commission of the blackest crimes, presses forward in the full persuasion that he is doing his duty.

2. Errors in principle have a more pernicious influence on society than errors in practice. Although the errorist in practice is a pernicious example, as he blunts the edge of sensibility, and renders crimes familiar; yet his influence will not compare with that of the errorist in principle. He may render crimes familiar, but he dares not justify them. He is conscious that he is wrong; he therefore appears before the world with a self accusing countenance. He may endeavor to palliate, but he cannot justify his errors. But the errorist in principle is persuaded that he is right; he comes in the disguise of religion, and like Paul, thinks that he ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazereth. These things he will do. He offers you poison and with every appearance of sincerity tells you, it is an excellent medicine; he blinds your eyes, yet really believes, he has enabled you to see more clearly. Although he ruins the soul, he verily thinks he has done God service. Conscious of the rectitude of his cause, and fired with a per-

severing zeal, like the ancient Pharisees, he is willing to compass sea and land to gain one proselyte, although he makes him two fold more the child of hell than before.

3. That errors in principle are more pernicious than errors in practice, is evident from the fact, that they are the prolific source of the worst kinds of *practical* errors. They are the root of which practical errors are the branches. This is exemplified in the history of Paul. He went from city to city, to compel their inhabitants to blaspheme. He shut up the saints in prison and when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them. He raged for their blood and persecuted them unto strange cities. Here let us trace these cruel feelings to their cause. Was Paul more bloody than other men? Had he greater delight in blasphemy? This cannot be pretended. In other situations, he was tender, affectionate and merciful. The cause of these cruelties may be found in the influence of errors in principle. Paul was a sincere believer in a false system of religion, and verily believed that he was doing his duty. The page of history is polluted with a long catalogue of crimes, which owed their existence to the same cause. Infidels have reiterated the charge that more blood has been shed on account of religion, than from every other cause. Whether we admit or repel the charge, it must be granted, that errors in principle, whether in law, politics, or in religion, have been the most prolific source of errors in practice.

Our subject may serve to illustrate the fallacy of the opinion, "That he is right who acts as well as he knows." Every person, who acts according to the testimony of his own conscience, may be said to do as well as he knows. Thus Paul, when he compelled the saints to blaspheme, verily thought that he ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The heathen, who worship idols, burn widows, drown their children and commit suicide, are fully persuaded, that by such acts, they shall merit divine favor. The universalists, deists, and other errorists are doubtless many of them, sincere in their belief.—Are they therefore guiltless? If their sincerity will justify them, then Paul was guiltless; yet Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, called himself the chief of sinners, because he persecuted the church of God. But if Paul's sincerity did not acquit him of guilt, we may conclude that there is an error in the commonly received opinion, that he is right who acts according to the dictates of his own conscience. Permit me, reader, to substitute another in the place of this generally received principle. He is not necessarily right who acts as well as he knows; *but he is right who acts as* *well as he has the means of knowing.* Had Paul acted as well as he had the means of knowing, he would have been innocent; for then he would have improved the talents committed to his charge. Paul did not do this, therefore he was guilty. He had the means of knowing that Jesus is the Christ; but being exceedingly attached to the self-righteous religion of the Pharisees and exceedingly mad against the christians, he shut his eyes against the light and deceived his own conscience. The heathen possess the light of nature, and if they improved their advantages, they would be justified.—But not choosing to know what they have the means of knowing; therefore, by the law of nature, they are guilty. You enjoy the light of the gospel, you have the means of knowing the way, the truth and the life. You may shut your eyes, prejudice your mind, harden your heart, and at last sincerely believe any of the false and destructive errors of the age; but your sincerity will not excuse you. God is treating us as rational and intelligent beings, and he will at last require of us, not sincerity merely, but an honest and faithful improvement of the talents committed to our charge.

Our subject may serve to illustrate the importance of examining the evidence, on which we found our belief of first principles. Only take a false principle for granted, and you may reason fairly and conclusively, and yet be further and further removed from truth. Admit that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor, and Paul would find no difficulty in justifying his persecutions, by the Jewish law. When Christ was brought before Pilate, the Jews demanded his crucifixion, because he was guilty of blasphemy. Admit that he was an impostor, and both their charge and plea are good: for by their law, blasphemy was punished with death. In the same way, every other errorist may establish his conclusions, if the principles on which they are founded are taken for granted.—Admit the principle for which Hume contended, that the reality of miracles cannot be established by testimony, and deism might triumph over christianity. Admit that sin does not deserve an eternal punishment, and it may be proved that there will be a general restoration of the impenitent. Admit that Christ came to abrogate the divine law, and you may prove that all will be happy after death. Hence the importance of examining the evidence, on which we rest first principles. If our first priciples are false, we may very sincerely embrace the greatest and most destructive errors: we may think ourselves right when we are wrong, our state safe, when it is ruinous; that we are the friends, while we are the enemies of God; that we are doing good, while we are doing evil; and that we are advancing the cause, while we are persecuting the friends of the Lord Jesus.

Messrs. Editors,

In looking over your Magazine for December, I perceived that one of your subscribers wishes for information upon a subject, which he thinks important. If you should judge the following communication will be of use to him, or to the public, you are at liberty to insert it in any of the subsequent numbers of your work.

In order to bring the subject, and what I have to offer, respecting it, under one view, I will quote the words of your subscriber.

"There are many persons within the circle of my acquaintance, who hope they are pious, but still neglect to make a public profession of religion, from fear, that they have not the necessary qualifications for church membership. If you or some of your correspondents will state, what these qualifications are, and some of the evidences by which we may know whether we posses them, you will confer a favor upon an interested subscriber." C.

In order to be qualified for membership in the christian church, it is necessary that a person should know the principal doctrines and duties of the gospel, and be settled in his belief of their truth and importance. For, if he be ignorant of them, or wavering in his faith concerning them, with what sincerity or comfort can he profess the religion of Christ?

A second thing necessary to church membership is, that a person should understand the nature of covenanting with God, and with his people. He should know that God, in the riches of his goodness through the Redeemer, proposes to enter into covenant with all those who properly enter into covenant with him, and to be under engagement to them respecting their souls and salvation. He should be acquainted with what God engages to perform, and with what those who enter into covenant with him and with his professing people, lay themselves under obligations to do. And he should, not only, have information concerning what is implied and required in the covenant, but be willing to enter into it, and to be under special obligations to be and to do what it requires.

A third qualification is a willingness to submit to the regular discipline of Christ in his church. No one that is unwilling to submit to the order of Christ's house, is qualified to enter it. Nor is he who is unwilling to be active and faithful and to stand in his lot in watching over the members, and in reproving and exhorting them, as occasion may require, and in maintaining the order and discipline of the church. If a person esteem the church of Christ, and is willing to be in subjection to it, and to use his influence and exertions for its order and purity he is, in these respects, qualified for membership.

I mention, as a fourth qualification, a disposition to unite with the church in supporting the worship and ordinances of God. It is incumbent on a church to see that these are maintained among them, for the honor and glory of God, for their mutual instruction and benefit, and for the instruction and salvation of others. These are among the purposes for which a church is instituted. All who would unite with it, should be willing to aid in promoting them.

Further. True religion, or a real change of heart is an indispensable qualification. Let his other qualifications be what they may, no one should unite with the church who is not a subject of renewing grace, and of consequence, of repentance and faith in Christ. He must be more than a nominal, he must be a real christian. The church was not designed to embody saints and sinners, but saints only. No others can honestly and and cordially enter into covenant with God, and with one another. No others are the real friends of Christ. No others renounce the world, and take God to be their God and portion, and accept of salvation by the Redeemer. No others do, in truth, give up themselves to God, to be his in life, in death, and forever.

To pass to the consideration of the other part of the subject: a person may know, whether he be a christian in reality, and of consequence, whether he possess the other qualifications, in some good measure.

First, by consciousness. True religion has its beginning and seat in the heart. As unrenewed men are entirely sinful, so any holy affections and exercises are evidence of being renewed in the spirit and temper of the mind.—Let those who feel interested inquire, whether they are conscious of having experienced any essential change in their feelings, and whether they have any holy exercises and affections. Right or holy affections are supreme love to God, a desire that his honor and glory may be promoted, and to know and to do his commandments and unreserved submission to his will. Those, who possess them, hate sin and are humbled for it before God. The controversy, which they have had with him, is given up, and they have been reconciled to his character and to his moral and providential government. If this should be thought not clear and distinctive, and that there is danger of being deceived, let the inquirer ask, in what his affections are centred, whether in God, or the world: what he feels to be his portion and chief good: in what he delights the most: or what is the most pleasing to his heart. If he cannot determine whether his motives be right, let him consider what are the highest objects of his affections and joys.

In the next place, a person may

know something by his conduct concerning the reality of his religion. This may furnish evidence to himself as well as to others. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, will bring forth good things. The outward life will manifest something of the principles that exist and reign within. The nature of the tree is ascertained by its fruit. Men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. If a person delight in and regularly perform christian duties and is disposed and resolved to continue in the performance of them, the evidence of the reality of his religion, is in his favor. But if he habitually neglect plain moral and religious duties and live in known and allowed neglect of them, he ought to consider his piety, at best, as very questionable. The reality of his faith does not appear from his works.

If, then, a person has a knowledge of the leading doctrines and duties of the gospel and is conscious of believing and loving them; if he understand what is implied in covenanting with God and his people and be willing to enter into a covenant engagement with them and then to lay himself under special obligations to lead a dutiful and holy life; if he be willing to submit to the regular discipline of the church and to assist in maintaining it and the ordinances and institutions of Christ; and if he be conscious of having these and the other marks of piety; and his life is measurably in favor of his being a true christiain, he is qualified for membership in the church of Christ. To be free from all doubts is, by no means, indispensable to a union with the church. The want of a well-grounded hope is but the want of assurance, is not a disqualification. Persons who believe that they have been renewed may be kept from making a profession of religion, through fear that they shall not be able to live as they ought to do, if they should make a profession. This is to neglect a present important duty under the apprehension, that they may fail in porforming some future duties. There may be something of pride in this fear. Here is certainly a distrust of the promises and power of Christ. Others, who have hope, may think themselves too deficient in religion to be united with the church and therefore, they delay, that they may grow in grace and become more prepared for such a union. If facts could be known, it would probably appear, that nothing was ever gained by a delay for this purpose. Besides, will the christian be likely to grow more in holiness out of the church than in it? By the neglect of the means of divine appointments than by the observance of them. It is grace, and not the degree of grace that is required. Delay for the purpose mentioned, partakes more of the spirit of self-righteousness and self-dependance, than of real humility, faith and obedience. Those, who contemplate a union with the visible followers of Christ, should ask themselves, as in the presence and fear of God, whether they have reason to believe, that they are the subjects of renewing grace, and have accepted of salvation on the terms of the gospel; whether they esteem the church of Christ and desire its privileges; whether it is in obedience to Christ, that they wish to come to the holy ordinance of the supper; whether they can truly and cordially give up themselves and their all to God and to his service, and take him for their portion, and can willingly lay themselves under the bonds of the covenant to him and to his people, to live as the grace of God teaches. If they can answer these questions in the affirmative, they need not hesitate about their qualifications for church membership.

D.

A QUESTION.

Messrs. Editors,

I do not wish to bring my difficulties very often, either before you, or the public; but I have some acquaintances, about whom I wish to ask your opinion. But before I tell you about them, it will be proper to tell you who I am. I am a plain bible man, disposed to believe what it says and to do what it requires. To be short: some years since, I was brought to a deep sense of my sinfulness and guilt, and was clearly convinced of the opposition of my heart to God, and of the great danger I was in, of perishing as his enemy. At length, I perceived a change in my affections and views in respect to God, his law and government. I saw that he was right and I was wrong and criminal. I justified him and condemned myself. I felt willing to be and do as he should order concerning me. A peace and joy ensued to which I had been an entire stranger. In looking into the bible, I found, that I had the feelings to which the promises of pardon and salvation are made. I began to hope and have continued to do so. Although I often sink, as into the dust, before God, on account of my sins; yet I enjoy myself beyond comparison better than I ever did before. I pray in my family and religiously educate my children. I am conscientious in attending public worship and ordinances, and in observing the sabbath and in doing what appears to be my duty. My hope of heaven rests on the atonement of Christ and on the promises made to the renewed in heart. Had I no evidence of repentance towards God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, I should be without hope. I see not but I have as much peace of mind as any around me. I have heard no complaint of my being dishonest in my dealings, or neglectful in the performance of the civil and social duties of life. But some of my acquaintances tell me that my experience and performance of religious duty are unnecessary, and that my belief is tradition and wholly false. They labor abundantly with me, and urge me to renounce my creed and to embrace theirs, which, in the main, is this; that every body is going to heaven, let them feel and live as they may. So far as I can learn, I am not the only one, but that very many others are urged and pressed to believe as they do.—Now the questions which I wish you, or some of your correspondents to answer are these: What shall I think of these men? What is their motive? If they are certain that all are going to heaven, why should they have so much concern about what they believe? They manifest no more concern than others about what people do. Any one may do what he pleases, if he will only believe with them. Do they think that I, or others would be any better members of society, if we should adopt their creed? Do they think, that we should be any more honest, or any more moral in any respect? Do they suppose that I and others would feel more happy, if we believed as they do? Is it then their great benevolence towards me, that disposes them to be so unwearied in their endeavors to destroy my faith and to force upon me their own? Do they think that their opinions are more honorable to God and therefore, they are disposed to take all ways and times to inculcate them? Am I then, to suppose that their concern for the honor and glory of God leads them to so much zeal and activity? They do not, as I can see, manifest such concern in any other way. I again ask, what I ought to think of the motives of these men? What is their object? Now, I could well enough hear them pity and vilify every denomination but their own; I could bear being troubled often with their books and zealous conversation, if I could see good reasons for believing that they had any better end in view, than the propagation of their sentiments and the increase of their number. If you, or some of those who write for your Magazine, and who can see farther into men and things than I can, would answer the questions I have proposed you will gratify BIBLICUS.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD GLORIOUS.

The word gospel, properly signifies good news. In this sense, the heavenly hosts understood the gospel, when they celebrated the birth of the glorious Redeemer.—"The angel said unto the shepherds, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will towards men." The gospel is good news, because it proclaims the grace and glory of God in the great purpose of redemption through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. This purpose was formed by God, before he had created the heavens and the earth, or given existence to men or angels. The gospel, which reveals this eternal purpose, is called "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." And it is glorious, because it displays the glory of God.

Though God can look directly into the hearts of his creatures, yet they cannot look directly into his heart. Though God be in himself infinitely glorious, yet his creatures cannot discern his glory without some medium through which it is displayed. The gospel is the scheme, which God devised from eternity, to manifest himself to his intelligent creatures. This design is, in various respects, exceedingly glorious.

1. It is the greatest design, which God could form. The greatness of any design consists in its extent. The more extensive any design is, the greater it is. When God formed the purpose of redemption, there was, in the universe, nothing to limit his design, but his own pleasure. He existed alone; and all time and space lay before his mind, without a single impediment in the way of his extending his design as far as possible. There was no reason, therefore, why he should not act like himself in forming his design and make it as extensive, as his infinite understanding could make it. Accordingly, he has taught us in the scriptures, that his great purpose of redemption does extend from eternity to eternity and include and affect every being and object in the universe. It comprises every material particle in the material world; every sensitive nature in the animal world; every rational creature in the moral world; and every intelligent being in the intellectual system. In forming this design God had a first and supreme regard to himself; then he regarded his Son; then his Spirit; then good and bad angels; then good and bad men; and then every creature and object, that he has made for the use of his rational creatures. The apostle expressly declares to the saints at Ephesus, that it is the design of the gospel "to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." In his epistle to the saints at Colosse, he dwells more largely upon the wonderful extent of the design of redemption through Jesus Christ. He says—"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him."

The design of the gospel extends to the utmost bounds of creation;

and to the utmost bounds of duration. It is as extensive as possible; it is as extensive as God could make it. He meant to form as great a design, as the perfections of his nature could enable him to form. And in the purpose of redemption God has formed such a design, as will, in its accomplishment, manifest all his greatness as fully and clearly as possible, during the endless ages of eternity. The design of the gospel is, therefore, perfectly glorious in greatness.

2. The gospel is glorious in wisdom. It is the wisest design that God could form. This wisdom, however, does not appear merely from its extent. Many designs, that are formed by created agents and are great in their extent, are entirely destitute of wisdom and extremely foolish and absurd. But the great design of the gospel is as perfect in wisdom, as it is in greatness, because it was formed by the only wise God.—When all the designs, that were possible, were before his mind, it was morally impossible for him not to adopt the wisest. In forming the greatest possible design, God must have employed his highest wisdom. No reason can be assigned, or even conceived, why God should not display all his wisdom in forming the design of redemption. And it is certain from scripture, as well as from reason, that the gospel contains all the wisdom that God ever will display, or that created beings ever will discover. It was formed on purpose, as the apostle declares, to make known his manifold wisdom to principalities and powers in heavenly places, and to all other intelligent creatures. And though they may always admire, yet they will never be able to comprehend the wisdom of the gospel. Hence the apostle, in the contemplation of this subject, exclaims, in a rapture of admiration, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out?" Wisdom spreads a glory over any design; and especially over a great design which requires a great variety of means to accomplish it. In the gospel there is the most astonishing combination of means to accomplish its ultimate end. And in this respect, it contains and displays the greatest wisdom of the the wisest being. The end, which God proposes in the gospel and the means he uses to obtain it, are perfect in wisdom. The gospel is therefore, as glorious in wisdom as it is in greatness.

3. The gospel is glorious in goodness. It is the best design that could be formed by the infinite goodness of God. A design may be great in extent and wise in all its parts, and yet be totally evil in its nature and tendency. But of all possible designs the gospel is absolutely the best. "God is love." And all his natural perfections are entirely under the direction of his perfect benevolence.

It was morally impossible, that he should form a design, that was malevolent and pernicious, or one that was destitute of perfect goodness. His infinite understanding enabled him to discern the greatest natural and moral good of the universe through the boundless ages of eternity; his unerring wisdom enabled him to devise all the means, which are necessary to effect his greatest good; and his goodness must have necessarily chosen and fixed this best design, in preference to every other design. It is demonstrably certain, that the scheme of redemption is a transcript of the divine character and as perfect in goodness as it is in wisdom. It proposes the best end that could be proposed. As it embraces all intelligent beings, so it consults and secures the highest holiness and happiness of the intellectual system. And as it is the goodness of God, which adorns his other perfections, so it is the goodness of the gospel, that renders it superlatively glorious. All the glory of the blessed God is instamped upon it and discovered by it.—Accordingly the apostle says, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The gospel is so perfectly and infinitely benevolent and gracious in its nature, design and effects, that it will eventually discover all the feeling of God's heart respecting himself and all his creatures and display all the moral excellence of his moral character. "The breadth and length, the depth and height" of the divine goodness will be forever displayed and seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The gospel is designed to display all the glory of God; or to cause all his goodness to be seen and felt by every rational creature. And this display of his goodnes will produce the greatest extent of holiness and happiness, that can possibly exist in the universe. It will fill the ever enlarging capacities of all holy creatures with knowledge, love, joy and praise forever and ever. It is the benevolent nature, tendency and influence of the gospel, which renders it supremely glorious. The gospel is as glorious in goodness, as it is in wisdom and greatness. It is indeed, the goodness of the gospel, which glorifies its greatness and wisdom.—The gospel is as good as the heart of God, which consists in pure, perfect, infinite and eternal benevolence and forms the whole glory of his existence, perfections, designs and works. The gospel is "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God." It contains all the glory of God and all the glory of the universe.

Paul.

Messrs. Editors,

In reading the scriptures, I have often been perplexed with the question, whether God, who so often spake to Abraham and the prophets, and who, throughout the Old Testament, is spoken of as the Creator of the world, &c. is Christ in his official capacity, or God the Father. If some of your correspondents will answer this question satisfactorily, they will confer a special favor upon one, if no more of your constant readers.

From the Utica Christian Repository.

NEW DENOMINATION.

There have been, in all ages, different denominations of religionists. We have long been accustomed to hear of Calvinists, and Arminians, and Antinomians, and Unitarians, and Universalists, and a great variety of other names, intended to designate those who embrace schemes of religion differing more or less from each other.—And we have heard of *Nothingarians*, who are supposed to embrace no religious system whatever. But there is a class of men, who are becoming very numerous at the present day, who have, I think, no appropriate designation. They are not, indeed, found by themselves, as a distinct community, but are intermingled with other communities. Their principles, however, and their practices, are such as clearly entitle them to a distinct name. And their being intermingled with other communities is no objection to this. For we hear of Calvinistic Episcopalians, Calvinistic Presbyterians, Calvinistic Congregationalists, Calvinistic Baptists, and so also of Arminian Episcopalians, Arminian Presbyterians, Arminian Congregationalists, and Arminian Baptists. It is a great convenience to have a name, if one can be found sufficiently expressive of the thing, since it saves much circumlocution. And no one is ever ashamed of his name, unless he is ashamed of the thing which that name expresses. And as this class, of which I am speaking, are already very numerous, and are rapidly extending their influence, and bid fair, I think, to be the prevailing denomination, which, at no distant day, may swallow up all others, I think it is high time they had a distinct name. And as no term occurs to me more expressive of their true character, or more descriptive of their principles and practice, I would take the liberty of proposing, until some better name is suggested, that they be called *Anythingarians.*

In the early part of my life I met occasionally with some of this class, and not fully understanding their principles, I sometimes wondered at their conversation and conduct. But further acquaintance with men and things has explained it all. I once resided for a considerable time in a populous place, where there were several churches, the ministers of which frequently interchanged their labors and where also travelling preachers frequently stopped and spent a sabbath. Of course, there was a great variety in the preaching both as to style, manner, and talent, and as to the sentiments which were inculcated. A certain class of hearers, however, were always pleased. Let the preacher be whom he might, if he only spoke fluently and gracefully, and let the sentiments of his discourse be what they might, this class of hearers were always gratified. I could never come out of the place of worship, and walk the length of a street in their company, without hearing them exclaim, "What an excellent sermon! What a fine preacher!" And I often had to cross the street, or hurry along with a haste scarcely decent, to avoid the usual interrogatory, "Don't you think it was an excellent sermon?" This class of people, I conclude, were *Anythingarians.*"

Happening once in a strange place, I inquired something about their preacher, and the reply was "Oh, he is one of the best of preachers; *every body* is pleased with him. Before he came among us there were many different parties, each having their own peculiar views, and keeping up separate meetings: Now, *all* are united. Calvinists and Arminians, Presbyterians and Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists, and Quakers, all go to hear him, and all are equally well pleased; and the congregation increases rapidly." I thought he must be a rare kind of character to be entitled to such a commendation as this. But a few more years' acquaintance with the world has corrected my error and convinced me that this character is not so rare as I then imagined. It is not yet, however, quite clear to my mind whether he was an Anythingarian or a Nothingarian, though my opinion inclines to the former. Most of his hearers were without doubt, Anythingarians.

I have known some men of such a happy versatility of genius that they could so accommodate themselves to those with whom they happened to be, and so enter into all their views and feelings, as to seem, for the time, to be just like them. Like the chameleon they always assumed the color of those objects to which they were nearest. With Calvinists, they would seem to talk in favor of the doctrines of grace; and with Arminians, they would seem to be opposed to those doctrines, and in favor of the opposite views. With Episcopalians, they would speak well of the church, and seem to have no aversion to forms of prayer, and confirmation, and ordination by bishops. With Presbyterians, they would seem to prefer the Presbyterian order and government; and with Congregationalists, they would seem to be well pleased with their system. With Baptists, they would express a high opinion of the purity and orthodoxy of their churches, seem almost willing to *go into the water* and appear to approve of every thing but their close communion, and not blame them for that.—

With Methodists, they would talk fluently of their *good feelings*, exhort in their meetings, say *amen* to their prayers, encourage women to speak in public, and exhort awakened sinners to *press forward.* With Quakers, they would say *thee* and *thou*, and talk of the *light* within. And with all, they would expiate on the evils of a sectarian spirit, and enlarge in the praises of charity and liberal sentiments in religion. I have been sometimes greatly puzzled to account for such apparent changes, from one thing to its opposite, made in so short a time, and with so much facility. But I think I have found out the secret. These men were Anythingarians.

Besides the foregoing traits of character, which distinguish those of this denomination, I have taken notice of some other, which I will mention.

When a man, in all companies abounds in religious small talk, but carefully avoids saying any thing that has much point, or is very decided any way, I set him down as an Anythingarian.

When a man professes to think well of two opposite schemes of religion, and declares that he likes them both, and sees no important difference between them; or when two books, written on opposite sides of the same question, are presented to him, and after examination, he declares that he admires them both, and thinks they are equally good; I set him down as an Anythingarian.

When a man acknowledges the truth as the instrument of the conversion and sanctification of men, and at the same time embraces in his fellowship those who understandingly hate and oppose the truth, I set him down as an Anythingarian.

When a man professes to believe that holiness consists in disinterested benevolence, and that every selfish experience is a false experience, and yet embraces in his fellowship those who openly avow that their religion is wholly selfish, and those who publicly ridicule the idea of disinterested benevolence as chimerical and impossible, I set him down as an Anythingarian.

When two men of opposite principles go and converse with a third person for the purpose of ascertaining what his principles are, and each comes away with the impression that he agrees with him, I set down that third person as an Anythingarian.

When a man professes to believe the doctrines of the bible to be true, and acknowledges that they are plainly and abundantly taught in the scriptures, and at the same time considers the preaching of them as unprofitable and useless, if not positively injurious, and so converses with the opposers of those doctrines that they consider him as much opposed as they are, I set down that man as an Anythingarian.

When a man professes to believe the doctrines of the bible to be true, and declares that he is willing to have them preached, but is always in a tremor when he hears any of them mentioned from the pulpit, for fear they should be carried *too far*, I set him down as an Anythingarian.

When a man professes to believe the doctrines of the bible to be true, and declares that he understands them, and is edified with them, but is afraid of having them preached, lest *other people* should not understand them and be edified, I set him down as an Anythingarian.

When a man flatters me to my face, and speaks highly of me to my particular friends, but talks against me to my enemies, and elsewhere throws out sly hints to my disadvantage, I set him down as an Anythingarian.

When a man tells me that he agrees with me in my opinions, and admires my method of stating and vindicating them, and wishes he was only able to do it as well, and at the same time is very intimate with those who oppose my principles, and encourages all their efforts to bring those principles into disrepute, I set down that man as an Anythingarian.

When a church has a confession of faith, and require all whom they receive as members to give their public assent to it, and at the same time do not carefully examine applicants to know whether they understand and believe the doctrines contained in that confession, or knowingly receive such as do not believe those doctrines, or retain, without any effort at discipline, those members who openly oppose the doctrines to which they have solemnly assented I set down that church as a body of Anythingarians.

When a church has a covenant, by which all the members have solemnly bound themselves to walk *with that church* in all the ordinances of the gospel, and yet suffer their members to *walk away* whenever and wherever they please, I think that church must be deeply tinctured with Anythingarianism.

I might mention other traits, which distinguish this denomination from all others, and give them a claim to a distinct title; but these few hints will enable every reader to supply others from his own observation. And I intended to say something of the great advantages of belonging to this denomination; in which, however, I must be brief.

As I have observed already, I think this denomination bids fair to be the prevailing denomination, and to swallow up all others. And every one must be sensible of the great advantatge of belonging to that denomination which is the most numerous and powerful, and has the most extended influence. If a man belongs to a small body, he might almost as well stand alone. He cannot derive much help from his associates, and, what ever his talents may be, he is easily borne down by the resistless current of popular opinion. He cannot hope to gain any distinguished elevation in the world, and must be content to live and die in obscurity. But if he belongs to a great body, of extensive power and influence, he can hope through their assistance, to rise to eminence. And all the power and influence and character of that body may be considered as in some sense his own, since he is one of them. And in proportion as he is zealously devoted to the honor and interests of that body, he may expect they will have an eye to his honor and interests: and as he contributes to the advancement of his associates, he may expect them also to contribute to his. Every one must see, therefore, the great advantage of belonging to this denomination, as it regards his prospects of rising in the world.

The private professor, who adopts Anythingarian sentiments, possesses one great advantage over those of any other denomination. He can more easily establish and maintain the reputation of uncommon and distinguished piety; and especially with those whose acquaintance with him is but superficial. By making this his object and keeping it steadily in view, and becoming "all things to all men," in the sense and to the extent which his principles teach; by abounding in religious small talk, and being careful in mixed companies to say nothing of a decided character; by studying the principles and feelings of those with whom he converses, and carefully accommodating himself to their views and prejudices, so as to make them pleased with themselves, and think he is pleased with them; by appearing to agree with them in those things which they regard as most important, and not very strenuous in those things in which he differs from them; by appearing to embrace them cordially in his fellowship, and to think quite as favorably of their religious character and sentiments as of his own; by pursuing this method, he may render himself very agreeable to all sorts of people, and gain the reputation of having an uncommon share of good feeling, and of being an eminent example of piety, charity and catholicism. And if any whose acquaintance is more intimate, should ever suggest a doubt whether he is not the best man in the world, it will be at once interpreted to the disadvantage of him who makes the suggestion, and it would be better for him to hold his peace, or join in the general commendation

The minister who adopts Anythingarian sentiments, will find it much easier to get along in the world. If he has only common talents, he can soon become a great man. If he becomes "all things to all men," in the sense which these sentiments teach, he must needs be very popular.. And as to his preaching, that, of course will be accommodated to the taste of his hearers. If they are Anythingarians too, it will be very easy to please them. And if it should happen that a part of them are decided and rigid in their adherence to orthodox sentiments, he can so temper his discourses as to introduce many orthodox terms, which will make them think he is correct in his sentiments; and in private he can so converse with them as to render that impression deeper; while, by only introducing orthodox terms, and never explaining them, or if he should think some professed explanations necessary, by giving very general ones, which every hearer may interpret according to his own views, he will never offend those who are not orthodox. They will even be quite willing to hear the orthodox doctrines *so* preached. In this manner he will gain the esteem and confidence of all classes, and thus secure to himself a good name for keeping people together and building up society; and what is of some consequence too, he will secure a comfortable support to himself and family, and not be exposed, as the rigidly orthodox minister frequently is, to be driven about from place to place, an object of pity and of scorn.

And if the young preaher who adopts Anythingarian sentiments does not readily find a good vacancy in which to settle himself comfortably, perhaps, by putting his sentiments in practice, he can *make* one. Let him look out for some place which has an older minister of orthodox sentiments, and where there is some religious excitement. He can easily get recommended as a useful assistant at such a time. And when he is introduced, as he can scarcely fail of being, let him visit from house to house, and attend meetings with great diligence and zeal. Let him carefully study the views and feelings of the various sorts of people, and accommodate himself to every one according to the distinguishing principles of his sect. Let him now and then drop a hint, where he thinks it will do, that he is better acquainted with the management of a revival than their minister is; and let him often tell in public, how *many* revivals he has seen, and how *well* he understands them. Let him direct all his efforts to produce a general excitement of feeling, and to raise it to the highest pitch; and just at this crisis, let him privately urge the minister to preach the doctrine of election, as the best means at this moment, to produce a powerful effect, and greatly promote the work; and tell him how it has been done to great advantage by this, that, and the other minister, during great revivals in their societies. As an orthodox man he may be very probably inclined to do it; and if he should not, advantage can be afterwards taken of his neglecting to follow this good advice. But if he should, the point desired will most probably be gained. A violent opposition will be excited on the part of the impenitent whose attention is so far roused as to make them feel and hate the truth. And by a little management some of the church members may probably be induced to join in that opposition. Now let the young preacher, in conversation with all such, speak much of the danger of having that doctrine preached at such a time, as being likely to discourage sinners, grieve the Spirit, and stop the revival; and let him lament that the minister should be so imprudent, at such a critical time, and express his fears that the revival will stop. By the opposition and confusion which may be thus created, it is not unlikely that the excitement may be greatly diminished, and finally cease, and the minister be charged with destroying the revival. And it is quite likely that all this may occasion his dismission, and make way for the settlement of the young man in his place. Or if he should happen to get so far involved in the difficulty as to have no prospect of obtaining the place for himself, he may obtain it for some friend, who has been doing the same good turn for him elsewhere.

In short, the advantages to be obtained by adopting Anythingarian sentiments are so many and so great, and at the same time so obvious to persons of any acquaintance with the world, that there cannot remain a doubt, I should think, but that this denomination must increase, and be the prevailing denomination. And young men who wish to rise in the world must make up their minds to join it, or give up their hopes of distinction, and be content to live and die in obscurity. D. D.

ANECDOTE,

Extracted from a scarce and valuable publication.

There was an Italian Bishop who had struggled through great difficulties without repining, and who met with much opposition in the discharge of his Episcopal functions without betraying the least impatience. An intimate friend of his, who highly admired those virtues which he thought it impossible to imitate, one day asked the prelate if he could communicate the secret of being always easy? 'Yes,' replied the old man, 'I can teach you my secret, and with great facility—it consists in nothing more than making a right use of my eyes.' His friend begged him to explain himself. 'Most willingly,' returned the Bishop. 'In whatsoever state I am, I first of all look up to heaven, and I remember my principal business here is to get there; I then look down upon the earth, and call to mind how small a space I shall occupy in it, when I come to be interred; I then look abroad into the world, and observe what multitudes there are, who are in all respects more unhappy than myself. Thus I learn where true happiness is placed, where all our cares must end, and how very little reason I have to repine or complain.'

ORDINATIONS.

January 6, Rev. Charles White was ordained in Thetford, Vt. as colleague with Rev. Dr. Burton. Sermon by Rev. Dr. Tyler, President of Dartmouth College.

January 9, Rev. Alexander Young was ordained over the the New South Church and Society, Boston. Sermon by Rev. John G. Palfrey.

January 20, Rev. John D. Peirce, a graduate of Brown University, was ordained over the Congregational Church and Society, in Sangerfield, N. Y.—Sermon by Rev. William R. Weeks, of Paris.

*** *Nomos* is just received.

THE

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

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Messrs. Editors,

I noticed in your number for February, this question, "Is God, who so often spoke to Abraham and the prophets, and who, throughout the Old Testament, is spoken of as the Creator of the world, Christ in his official capacity or God the Father?" If you think the following discourse will throw any light on the important subject of the above mentioned question, you are at liberty to insert it in your Magazine. N. S.

JOHN, VIII. 54.—*It is my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say that he is your God.*

Christ is here speaking to the Jews, who were, according to the flesh, the children of Abraham, and who, all along in the preceding context, claim their peculiar relation to that ancient and eminent patriarch. When therefore he tells them in the text, that He whom they called *their God*, was *his Father*, he means to assert, that *his Father* was *the God of Abraham.* His assertion is too plain to be misunderstood. Accordingly, I propose, in the present discourse, to make it appear,

That the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ.

The God of Abram was the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, who was afterward called Israel. I shall, therefore, indiscriminately use the phrases, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of Israel, to signify the God of the Old Testament.—Having premised this, I proceed to establish the truth of the general observation, that the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ. And this will appear, if we consider,

1. What Christ himself has said upon the subject. But in order to understand what he has said upon it, we must carry it in our minds, that he was by birth a Jew, of the seed of Abraham, and was brought up and lived among the Jews, the seed of Abraham; and therefore, that when he speaks of God, he means the same Supreme Being, whom the Jews called God, their God, or the God of Abraham. This single observation will serve to fix the meaning of all those texts in which he speaks of his Father, and determine, that if he ever means by his Father, the God of

Abraham, he always means the same God, by the same appellation. Now it is very evident, that Christ sometimes means the God of Abraham, by the phrase, his Father.—We have a plain instance of this, in his conversation with the Jews, related in the verses preceding the text. "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him; If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. They answered him, we be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man. Jesus said, I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.—They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. Then said they to him,—we have one father, even God. Jesus said unto them, if God were your Father, ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God." Here Christ explains whom he meant by his Father, even him, whom the Jews called their Father and God. In the sixth chapter of John, Christ says, "No man can come to me, except the Father who sent me draw him." And, this he proves in the next verse, by a quotation out of the prophets. "It is written in the prophets:—And they shall be all taught of God.—Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh to me." By God in the first clause of this verse is to be understood the God of Abraham; and the same God, Christ calls the Father, by which he claims the God of Abraham as his Father. And the Jews always understood him to mean, that he claimed their God as his Father; which extremely exasperated them and led them to put him to death as a blasphemer. Christ having said, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them. Many good works have I shewed you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." They said this, because he claimed their God as his Father. Christ represented himself to be the Son of the God of Abraham, who was the God of Israel by what he said to the buyers and sellers in the temple. "Take these things hence: make not my Father's house an house of merchandize." The temple was acknowledged to be consecrated and devoted to the worship of the God of Israel; and therefore was, in a peculiar and appropriate sense, the house of the God of Israel. Christ did, therefore, indirectly, but plainly, call the God of Israel, who was the God of Abraham, his Father.

2. It appears that the God of

Abraham was the Father of Christ from his calling Christ his Son.—He called him so in the second Psalm. "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee." We find this text expressly applied to Christ in the New Testament; which proves that the God of the Old Testament, who was the God of Abraham, was the Father of Christ. In Matthew 3, 16, 17, we read, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.—And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was a fulfilment of the promise of the God of Israel to Christ, by the prophet Isaiah. "Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles." There is another passage in the 17th of Matthew, still more explicit upon this point. "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, his raiment was white as light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here, if thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.—While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The bright cloud here was doubtless the Shekinah, or that cloud, which was light to the Israelites and darkness to the Egyptians. Indeed, this was that cloud, which was the usual attendant on the God of Israel. It is plain, therefore, that this was the God, who called Christ his beloved Son. And the apostle Peter, speaking of the scene, represents it in the same light. "He received, says he, from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Thus the God of Israel calls Christ his Son, and Christ calls the God of Israel his Father. The united testimony of both puts it beyond all doubt, that the God of Israel, who was the God of Abraham, was the Father of Christ. I observe,

3. That the apostles represent the God of Abraham as the Father of Christ. Here again, we must remember, that all the apostles were Hebrews, the natural seed of Abraham; and of course, that when they use the name of God, or the phrase, our God, they always mean the God of Abraham, the Father of Christ. So the apostle Paul explains the matter.

"For says he, though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven, or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many.) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." With this idea in our minds, let us turn to the epistles, and read the inscriptions, which all, but one or two, represent the God of the apostles, who is the God of Abraham, as the Father of Christ.

The inscription of the epistle to the Romans runs thus: "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead." By God here, Paul means the God of Abraham, for it was the God of Abraham, who promised Christ, and inspired the prophets to foretel his coming; and this God he declares was the Father of Christ, and raised him from the dead.

The inscription of the first epistle to the Corinthians is expressed in nearly the same terms, or at least, is of the same import. "Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Here Paul represents God the Father as a distinct person from God the Son. But in his inscription of the second epistle to the same church, he says, "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The epistle to the Galatians begins with these words, "Paul an apostle (not of men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.) Grace be unto you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

In the first verses of the epistle to the Ephesians, we read, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus: Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." Here the apostle calls God, the God of Abraham, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul inscribes his epistle to the Colossians in these words: "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you."

The inscriptions of the epistles to the Philippians, of the first and second epistles to the Thessalonians, of the first and second epistles to Timothy, of the epistle to Titus, and of the epistle to Philemon, run in this, or similar language: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." This language, as we have often observed, implies, that the God of the apostles was the God of Abraham, and the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ.

The beginning of the epistle to the Hebrews is so much to our purpose, that it must not be omitted. It is in these words. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son." The God, who spake, at sundry times and in divers manners unto the fathers by the prophets, we very well know, was the God of Abraham. And this God, the apostle expressly says, was the father of Christ.—To give these inscriptions their due weight on this subject, it is proper to observe, that the apostle speaks with great accuracy and precision, and with a particular design, to tell us who the father of Christ was; and he invariably declares, that he was his God, that is, the God of Abraham.

But there is one passage of scripture more, which I have reserved for the last to be mentioned, because it serves to illustrate all the above cited passages, and to prove to a demonstration, that the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ. The words I allude to are those, which Peter uttered on the occasion of healing the man who had been lame from his mother's womb. "And as the lame man, who was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch, that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness, we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One, and just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him, hath given this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquity." Here Peter, in a long discourse clearly and fully proves, from all the prophets, that the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, was the Father of Christ; or, that the God, whom the men of Israel called the Lord their God, was the Father of Christ. And this fully confirms what Christ himself says to the Jews in the text. "It is my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God." Thus it appears from a great variety of passages from both the Old and New Testament, that the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ; then the Father of Christ was the Creator of the world.

We find this plainly and repeatedly asserted in many places in the Old Testament. In the seventeenth of Genesis we are told, "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." Here the God of Abraham claims to be the Almighty God, and there can be no doubt that this Almighty God was the Creator of the world. It was the God of Israel, who was the God of Abraham, who at mount Sinai gave the fourth commandment to his people Israel, the seed of Abraham, saying, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.—For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." In this commandment, the God of Israel declares himself to be the Creator of all things. Moses reminds the children of Israel, that their God, who was the God of their fathers, and entered into covenant with them, was the Creator of the world. He says to them, "The Lord thy God is a merciful God, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them, namely, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For ask now of the days that are past before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth—did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" Here it is expressly asserted, that the God who entered into covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was the Creator of man upon the earth. Again we read in Isaiah 45th, "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the works of my hands, command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded." It would be easy to cite a multitude of such passages out of the Old Testament, which represent the God of Israel as the great Creator. But those I have mentioned are sufficient to establish the truth beyond all doubt, that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was the Creator of the world.

Hence it plainly follows, that the Father of Christ, the first person in the Trinity, was the Creator of the world.

2. If the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ; then the Father of Christ gave the law at mount Sinai. The law was given at Sinai, by the same God, who brought Israel out of Egypt; and we are expressly told, that he was the God of Abraham. In the third chapter of Exodus it is said, that the God of Abraham delivered Israel, by the hand of Moses. "God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done unto you in Egypt. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Here is an express declaration, that it was the God of Abraham, who sent Moses to Israel, and by his hand brought them out of Egypt to Canaan. And we are as expressly told, that the God of Abraham, who brought Israel out of Egypt, was the God who gave the law at mount Sinai. If we turn to the 20th of Exodus, we may read as follows. "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me," &c. Thus it appears, that it was the God of Abraham, who brought Israel out of Egypt, and gave them the law at mount Sinai. And since the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ it necessarily follows, that it was

the Father of Christ, the first person in the Trinity, who gave the law at mount Sinai.

3. If the God of Abraham was the father of Christ; then the Father of Christ was the King of Israel under the Old Testament.—The Israelites, from the time they left Egypt, until they were finally dispersed after the destruction of their city and temple, were under a peculiar civil government, which has been generally called a *Theocracy*, or a government of God. It fully appears from the writings of the Old Testament, that the God of Abraham was their King, or supreme civil Ruler.—God asserts, and they acknowledge, his absolute supremacy over them, in the mutual covenant, which they entered into with each other, recorded in the twenty-sixth of Deuteronomy. "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them, with all thine heart and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and to hearken to his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments."—That this was the God of Abraham who entered into this covenant with Israel, and became their King and supreme civil Sovereign, appears from the twenty-sixth of Leviticus, where he tells them, in case of disobedience, "If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember: and I will remember the land." Agreeably to these representations, we find that the Church of God in Isaiah's day, owned and claimed him as their king and sovereign. "The Lord, say they, is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver the Lord is our King; he will save us." If the God of Abraham was the King of Israel, and the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ, then the Father of Christ, the first person in the Trinity, was the King and Governor of Israel, under the Old Testament.

4. If the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ; then it was the Father of Christ who appeared and spake to men under the Old Testament. We have abundant evidence, that it was the God of Abraham, who appeared and spake to men, under the Mosaic dispensation; and of course, we must have the same evidence, that it was the Father of Christ, or the first person in the Trinity, who appeared and spoke to the ancient Patriarchs.

Let us now consider some of the most remarkable divine appearances under the Old Testament God's appearance to Abraham is the first I would mention.

The amount is this: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly. And Iwill establish my covenant between me and thee, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." This was certainly the appearance of the God of Abraham, and the God of Abraham, we have shown, to be the Father of Christ.

In the 3d chapter of Exodus, we have an account of a divine appearance to Moses. It is said, "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses, And he said, Here am I. And he said "Draw not hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God." Though the person that appeared on this occasion is called the *angel of the Lord*; yet he expressly declares, that he was the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob: and consequently he was the Father of Christ, or the first person in the Trinity.

The next *divine appearance* we have an account of, is that of the pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness. In the 13th chapter of Exodus, it is said, "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night." This divine appearance was considered by the Israelites as the appearance of the God of Israel, who often spake from it; especially when he gave the ten commands at mount Sinai, and when he spake to Moses *face to face* as a man speaketh to his friend. And if he was the God of Israel, who was the God of Abraham, he was the Father of Christ, the first person in the Trinity.

This leads me to mention the next *divine appearance*, which was on mount Sinai. Moses, in giving an account of it to the people, says, "The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, and said, I am the Lord *thy God*, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me, &c." These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly, in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud and of thick darkness, with a great voice—and ye said, Behold, the Lord our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, &c." This appearance and voice on mount Sinai were certainly the appearance and voice of the God of Israel and of the God of Abraham. I might mention the divine appearance in Solomon's temple, that to Isaiah, that to Ezekiel, that to Daniel, that to Adam in the garden of Eden, and every other divine appearance under the Old Testament; but there is no occasion of doing it, for if these I have mentioned were the appearances of the God of Abraham, then we may justly conclude that it was the God of Abraham, who was the Father of Christ, that made all the divine appearances, under the Old Testament.

5. If the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ; then all the sacrifices offered under the law, were offered to the Father of Christ. For all the sacrifices were offered to the God and King of Israel, who was the God of Abraham. And nothing could have been more proper, than that all the sacrifices which typified Christ should be offered to Him, to whom Christ was to offer himself. And Christ did offer himself, we are told, without spot unto God, that is, to God his Father. The pious Israelites, like pious christians under the gospel, always approached to God the Father, by the Son, who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. They came to God for pardon and acceptance, through a Mediator, who was typified by all the sacrifices they offered for their sins.

6. If the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ; then the God of Abraham was not Christ himself. This inference is of great importance, to which I have had an eye through the whole of this discourse. I have endeavored to pave the way, to bring out this inference with clearness and conviction. And if I have proved, that the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ, it must be admitted, that Christ, himself was not the God of Abraham. Some eminent divines, such as Watts and Doddridge, and many others, have supposed, that Christ himself was the God of Abraham; and of consequence, that it was Christ, who appeared and spake to Abraham; to Moses in the bush, to Israel at mount Sinai, and to the prophets: and that it was Christ who created the world, who gave the law at mount Sinai; who governed Israel; and to whom Israel offered sacrifices, and paid religious worship in the tabernacle and in the temple. But how can this be true, if it was the Father of Christ, who was the God of Abraham; who appeared and spake to him and other patriarchs; who created the world, gave the law at mount Sinai, governed Israel, and was worshipped in the tabernacle and in the temple? This notion is contrary to the whole current of scripture and to all the worship and institutions of the Old Testament and New, and introduces great confusion and error into the whole economy of redemption.

For if it was Christ, who was the God of the Old Testament, who appeared and spake to men and who gave the law and governed Israel; then God the Father is not once mentioned in the Old Testament. But who can imagine that God the Father the first person in the Trinity, is never mentioned as appearing and acting, for the long period of four thousand years after the world was created? or what ground is there to suppose that Christ would call the God of Abraham his Father, if God the Father was never mentioned, nor known to the Jews, under the Old Testament. Further, if Christ was the God of the Old Testament, then all the sacrifices offered under the Mosaic dispensation, were offered to Christ himself, instead of God the Father. But how absurd was it for those sacrifices, which typified Christ as Mediator, to be offered to Christ himself? This would have prevented the Israelites having any idea of any Mediator between God the Father and themselves, and given them a false notion of the only way of salvation. Besides, the supposition, that Christ was the God of the Old Testament, will appear still more absurd, if we consider that upon this supposition, when he came into the world, he obeyed himself, instead of obeying his Father; for he certainly obeyed the God of Abraham, and if he was the God of Abraham, then he obeyed himself. But he always declared, that he came to do his father's will, and not his own, and that he always acted in obedience to the commands, which he had received from the Father. It is not a little strange that so many divines have believed and maintained the notion that Christ was the God of the Old Testament. But they have been led into this error, by another false and groundless opinion, that Christ pre-existed in his human nature before he was born at Bethlehem. This opinion has long been prevalent among modern divines, especially ever since Dr. Watts published his Treatise concerning the glory of Christ; in which he endeavors to prove, that Christ was united with human nature before the creation of the world, and that he actually created the world, as God-man; that he gave the law to Israel as God-man—that he appeared to Abraham and the patriarchs in human nature; that this human nature was the soul of Christ, and that by his incarnation, he received nothing more than a human body. This false notion of the pre-existence of Christ's human nature has laid the foundation not only of the opinion that it was Christ in his pre-existent nature that created all things, that gave the law, and appeared visibly to the Patriarchs; but that Christ was not a divine person.—This led Dr. Watts, Dr. Clark, Dr. Price and the Arians of the present day, to deny the Divinity of Christ. But here it may be objected,

1. That Christ was the rock that followed the Israelites in the wil-

derness. Ans. That rock only typified Christ.

2. It may be objected, that it was Christ whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness.

Ans. When God the Father is tempted, God the Son is also tempted. For whatever may be said to be done to one person in the Trinity, may be said to be done to each person in the Trinity: just as what is said by one person in the Trinity, is said by each person in the Trinity. Thus the vision of Isaiah, when he saw heaven opened, and heard the seraphim cry, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, is ascribed, not only to the Father, but to Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, in the New Testament.

Objection 3. How could the Father, a pure spirit, visibly appear to the ancient patriarchs? In answer to this, I ask, how could the Holy Ghost at the baptism of Christ, visibly appear in the form of a dove? and afterwards in the form of cloven tongues? The truth is, either of the persons in the God-head, may, if he pleases, assume a material vehicle, and visibly appear and speak to mankind.

7. If the God of Abraham was the Father of Christ; then there appears a perfect consistency in the economy of the work of redemption—God the Father is the first person in the Trinity, and holds the office of Creator, Law giver and Governor. God the Son is the second person in the Trinity, and holds the office of Redeemer.—And God the Holy Ghost is the third person in the Trinity, and holds the office of Sanctifier. All these three persons were concerned in creating, in governing, and redeeming the world: but still in their official character, they bear distinct parts. The Son and Spirit in creating, governing, and redeeming the world, act by a delegated authority of the Father, who holds the supreme office in the sacred Trinity. It is of great importance to understand and maintain the economy of redemption; in order to understand and maintain the doctrine of the Trinity; and in order to avoid the errors of the Sabellians, the Arians, and Socinians, or Unitarians.

8. We learn from what has been said, the great importance of worshipping the one living and true God, as existing in three distinct persons and giving to each the glory due to his name—to the Father the glory of Creator— to the Son the glory of Redeemer— to the Holy Ghost the glory of Sanctifier.

Messrs. Editors.

A writer in your Magazine for the month of May, asks a question, to which I have seen no answer in your work. I send you the following for publication, if you think proper to insert it.

His question, as stated in his own words, is this: " When a person is admitted into a church, it is on credible evidence, that he is a true christian. Now can this connection be dissolved by excommunication, unless this evidence be destroyed in the minds of them who admit him into their number?" E. A.

In view of reasons, entirely satisfactory to my own mind, I shall take the affirmative side of the question. I shall here assume, that no member ought to be brought before the church, for an offence, for which he should not be excommunicated, unless he gives proper satisfaction. If, then, a true christian ought not to be excommunicated under any circumstances, none who are supposed to be so, should ever be brought before the church to answer for an offence. In effect and by consequence, no member would be a proper subject of discipline, so long as there is any remaining evidence in the minds of the church that he may be a true christian.

In the question which I have undertaken to answer, it seems to be taken for granted, that a member may be guilty of a fault, which in itself considered, deserves excommunication and remain incorrigible under all the previous steps taken with him, and yet not entirely destroy all evidence in the minds of the church, of his being a true believer in Christ; for if he cannot be thus guilty and incorrigible, there is no practical use in the question. If his offence and his neglecting, or refusing to make proper satisfaction are to be taken as evidence that he is not a christian, but a hypocrite, there is no difficulty in the case. In the opinion of him who asks the question, he may be excommunicated; I must, then, proceed upon the supposition, that these do not destroy the evidence of his being a true christian. If he repents and properly manifests his repentance, the church are bound to forgive him, and have no occasion to agitate the question of excommunication. Let the case supposed, be admitted, and I contend, that the member ought to be excommunicated. For,

In the *first place*, to excommunicate him, is not *contrary to the covenant* which the church make with him. They do not engage to retain him as a member, let his conduct be what it may, provided, that the evidence of his being a true christian is not entirely destroyed in their minds: but they obligate themselves to watch over him, and to endeavor to reclaim him when he goes astray. He engages, on his part, to submit to the regular discipline of Christ in that church. If he does not, he violates his covenant obligations, and may justly be removed.

In the second place, to excommunicate the member described, is not going beyond the rule given by the Great Head of the church, but required by it. The rule is not, if you have no evidence that the offending brother is a christian, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, or a publican; but if he neglect *to hear the church*, let him be so—excommunicate him. Nothing is said, by way of exception, in favor of those who may be deemed christians.

In the third place, excommunication is the last and important step in the process of discipline, to reclaim the offender. Can any reason be assigned, why a church should not take all the means prescribed to reclaim an offender of whom they have some remaining hope that he is a christian? Would not the church, indeed, be guilty of unfaithfulness, both to the Great Head and to the member, if they should neglect this step to bring him to repentance?

I add, *as a fourth reason*, the good of the church and the honor of religion require the excommunication of all offending, incorrigible members. The reformation of offenders is not the only object in view in the institution of discipline; regard is had to the well being of the church and the cause of Christ. The evil of the example and influence of offending members who are supposed to be christians, will be no less injurious to the body, than the evil example and influence of those guilty of the same offence, who may not be supposed to be christians. No less reproach and scandal will rest upon the church, upon the one supposition, than upon the other. The church must maintain its purity and its credit, either by bringing those who walk disorderly to repentance and reformation, or by removing them from their number. What they do not put away, they must bear and be chargeable with the sin and guilt which they suffer to be among them.

I must still add, that the ground of excommunication is different from that of admission. The member was admitted because there was credible evidence of his being a true christian; he is removed from the church because he has broken his covenant obligations and refuses to give satisfaction for his offence. This is the very ground upon which it was understood that he was to loose his membership, when he was admitted. He is removed too, that he may be reclaimed. If he had not given credible evidence that he was a real disciple of Christ, he ought not to have been received into the church; if he does not give satisfactory evidence of repentance and reformation, when he has offended, he ought not to be retained; but excommunicated both for his own good and that of the church. The principle of the querist, in your Magazine, seems to be, this, that if a person be admitted because he is a christian, he must be retained because he is a christian. The principle is erroneous and cannot be supported. It involves the consequences, that there is one law for one member and a different one for another; and that there must be partiality in discipline for the same offences, according as the church may be led to form an opinion of character. The principle, in its effect and operation, would embarrass and terminate all discipline. Who would venture to bring a complaint against a member, before he had ascertained the opinion of, at least, a majority of the church, concerning his being a true christian? Before the church would be likely to receive a complaint and act upon it, they must stop and satisfy their minds, not whether the person accused is guilty, but whether they have any reasons for believing that he is a true christian. If they have not, they may proceed and act upon the complaint, but if they have, they may stop. If they do not, the offender may stop them by refusing satisfaction and still retain his standing and all his privileges in the church.

I hope that all your readers, who are members of churches, will seriously consider the subject of this paper and entertain right views concerning it.

THE UNFRUITFUL FIG-TREE.

A certain man, says our Savior, had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.—Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years, I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And, he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year, also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and, if it bear fruit, well, and if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down."

This parable seems to have been spoken, primarily, in reference to the ancient covenant people of God. By his prophet, Isaiah, he said, "The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, is the house of Israel and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." God selected them to be his peculiar people, and highly distinguished them in respect to religious privileges. He, therefore, might reasonably expect, that they would be fruitful in every good work. But they neglected to perform their duty and were a reproach instead of an honor to their profession. Therefore, God justly determined to deprive them of their privileges.—When Christ, like Moses in former times, interceded for them, God graciously granted them a longer time and additional mercy, tried them another year, by sending apostles among them to call them to repentance. Some of them, under divine culture, brought forth fruit to the glory of God. The body of the nation, however, continued unfruitful, until they were cut down as cumberers of the ground. Ruin without remedy came upon them.

Although this parable has a primary reference to the ancient house of Israel, yet it doubtless has a further respect to all, and may with propriety be applied to all, who continue unfruitful, under the enjoyment of the means of grace and the privileges of the visible church.

By this parable, thus considered, are naturally suggested the following remarks :—

1. Some are favoured with a rich variety of the means of grace. The truth of this remark is obvious in view of what has already been observed respecting the ancient people of God. They were pre-eminently distinguished among the nations of the earth by their religious privileges. They possessed the word of God, while all the other nations of the earth were destitute of that invaluable blessing. God raised up and sent among them, from time to time, a succession of holy prophets to instruct them and made before them glorious displays of his character. Others, also, have enjoyed a rich variety of the means of grace. Those to whose eye these observations are presented, are highly distinguished from multitudes of the human race who are, at this moment, enveloped in moral darkness and perishing for lack of vision. God has placed you under circumstances peculiarly favorable for you to become acquainted with his character and your own, and with your duty to him and to mankind, and with what would conduce to your highest happiness in time and eternity. You have your residence in a christian land; the word of God is in your hands; your eyes see the heavenly light of the gospel; your ears hear its joyful sound. You are favored with sabbaths; with the privileges of the sanctuary; with the ministry of reconciliation and with the administration of the holy ordinances.

2. Of those who enjoy a rich variety of the means of grace, God may justly expect a correspondent improvement. Concerning the man who had a fig-tree planted in his garden, it is said, that "He came and sought fruit thereon." God may now justly require and expect much of those to whom much is given. In consequence of what he has done for them he has a right to expect that they will be fruitful in holy obedience. Has he graciously given you a revelation of his will? He has a right to expect that you will daily and candidly and prayerfully search his word, that you will receive and love its truths and make it the man of your counsel and the guide of your faith and practice. Does he favor you with his sabbaths and with the privileges of his sanctuary? He has a right to expect that you will esteem the sabbath a delight and will reverence his sanctuary. Does he favor you with the ministry of reconciliation and with the stated administration of his ordinances? He has a right to expect that you will become reconciled to him and will walk in all his commandments and

ordinances blameless. Has he so loved you, that under the influence of his consummate benevolence he has given his Son to die for you? He has a right to expect, that you will, cordially and gratefully, accept of the offers of his grace through him and comply with the requisitions of the gospel. He has a right to expect, that those of you who have entered into covenant with him before angels and men, will constantly and zealously engage in his service and be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness. He has a right too, to expect, that you, who are in a state of impenitence, will awake from your delusive dreams and without delay, repent and turn from all your transgressions.

3. The improvement, which God may justly expect of those who enjoy a variety of the means of grace, is but too seldom made. It is said of the man who came and sought fruit on his fig-tree that, "He found none." Instead of bringing forth under the divine culture, the fruits of righteousness and true holiness, the generality of the ancient and visible people of God, produced nothing but impiety and hypocrisy. Notwithstanding all the wonders they had seen in Egypt and all that God had wrought in their behalf; how frequent and daring were their rebellions, while journeying through the wilderness to the promised land! So great was their apostacy from God to idols, in the time of Elijah the prophet, that we read but of seven thousand among them' who had not bowed the knee to Baal. They became so degenerate as to hate and persecute even unto death, those holy prophets whom God, from time to time, sent among them. To them he sent his own Son and they received him not, but rejected him and nailed him to the cross. How very short did they come of making that improvement of their religious privileges which God had a right to expect of them? May not this be said of multitudes at the present day? Have not you, who are professors of religion, been to a great degree, unfruitful, under the means of grace which you have richly enjoyed? Have you not lost much of the savor of religion and become conformed to the world! where is the blessedness of which ye once spoke! As to those of you who make no profession of religion, is it not self-evident, that you have hitherto neglected to improve the religious privileges with which you have been favored? You have had the bible in your possession and have enjoyed sabbath and sanctuary privileges from your earliest days. You have, from sabbath to sabbath and some of you, from year to year, been warned of your danger and intreated to embrace the gospel. All, as yet, has been without any holy effect, you have, for ought that appears, lived in vain and have the grand business of life to commence.

4. Those who are unfruitful un-

der the means of grace, exert a deleterious influence upon others with whom they are conversant. The unfruitful fig-tree encumbered the ground. The injury which they, who are unfruitful under the means of grace, do to others is great. Are they members of the visible church? Their influence upon the body of which they constitute a part is of a wasting and destructive character. Cold and lifeless members naturally exert an influence upon those with whom they are connected and cause them to become cold and lifeless as themselves. They diffuse a spirit of moral slumber through the whole collective body. They often weaken the hand and discourage the heart of their brethren, who, but for their unholy influence, would be eminently devoted to the service of their Divine Master. Those, who make no pretentions to experimental religion, do also exert a deleterious influence upon the minds of their companions in sin. The influence is reciprocal. Being very numerous, they are frequently kept in countenance, while pursuing their important course, by the consideration of multitudes of which their company is composed. Individuals feel it to be more safe to live without an interest in Christ, than they would do, if the company of impenitent transgressors were comparatively small. Thus those who are unfruitful under the enjoyment of the privileges of the gospel, in a spiritual sense, encumber the ground.

5. It is to be expected, that such as encumber the ground, will by one kind of means, or another be removed. The man who owned the unfruitful fig-tree,is represented as saying to the dresser of his vineyard, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground." This should excite the expectation, that those members of the visible church, who are destitute of the fruits of holy obedience, will, in some way, be so effectually removed as to be no longer an encumbrance. Such were, from time to time, removed from the ancient church. Of all that generation of the Israelites, which left Egypt for Canaan, none except Joshua and Caleb were permitted to enter the promised land. Often under the former dispensation, did God take away the unholy from his visible church by his desolating judgments. To accomplish his perfect work about forty years after the commencement of the christian dispensation, when the whole head of the Jewish church had become sick, and the whole heart faint, Jerusalem was besieged and taken; the temple laid in ruins; the religious privileges of God's covenant people were taken away, and they were themselves dispersed among the nations of the earth.— In the visible church at the present time, "There are many who are united to Christ merely by external profession; by attendance

on ordinances, or by filling up some important station among his real disciples. Every person of this discription, has reason to fear that he will, in some way, be removed. By temptations and persecution many are detected, and become open apostates; some are left to turn aside unto false doctrines, and others are cut off by awful judgments, or silently removed by death."

6. Faithful ministers ardently desire and fervently pray that those, who have hitherto remained unfaithful under the means of grace, may be spared a little longer. "*Lord, let it alone this year, also*," said the dresser of the vineyard to the owner of the unfruitful fig-tree. How frequently and how importunately did the faithful servants of God, under the former dispensation, intercede in behalf of his professed people, when,in consequence of his threatenings, it was expected that he was about to bring his terrible judgments upon them. "Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against thy people," said Moses, in his intercession with God for Israel. "As for me, said Samuel, addressing them, God forbid, that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." Jeremiah, in prayer to God for his people, said, "Remember that I stood before thee, to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them." A similar spirit is possessed by all, at the present day, who have been truly called to engage in the work of the gospel ministry. In view of the providential dispensations of God, and numerous declarations of his word, the faithful minister cannot but fear, when his people have long been unfruitful under the means of grace, that many of them will be cut down as an encumbrance of the ground. Under the influence of such fear, he is disposed to pray. Spare them a little longer, before they are forever removed beyond the influence of the means of grace. Spare them until I have made one more effort to convince them of sin, and to arouse them from their delusive dreams. Though they have hitherto been disobedient and impenitent, yet perhaps, thy powerful word will shortly take effect and they will be reclaimed to the glory of thy grace and to the praise of thy holy name.

7. If those, who have hitherto remained unfruitful under the means of grace, continue so until they are finally cut down, all holy beings will acquiesce in God's treatment of them. After the dresser of the vineyard had plead with the owner concerning the fig-tree, that it might be spared for further trial, he adds, "If it bear fruit well; if not, then, after that thou shalt cut it down." I shall have nothing to say, I shall cordially acquiesce. Such seems to be the obvious meaning of this part of the parable and it teaches

us, that if those remain so who have been unfruitful under the privileges of the gospel, until they are cut down, all holy beings will acquiesce in the divine treatment of them. We by no means say that, they will ever take delight in the sufferings of their fellow creatures, in itself considered.—At the same time, it is evident, that the bible warrants the belief that all holy beings will have such a clear view of the justice of God in the punishment of the wicked, that they will entirely acquiesce in it. The inhabitants of heaven are represented as singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, which is none other than a song of praise to God on account of his destroying his enemies. Saint John relates that he heard an angel say in reference to the punishment of certain persecutors of the church, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus: for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy." And after these things says the Revelator, "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia, salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged her that did corrupt the earth—and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. *And again, they said Alleluia and her smoke rose up, forever and ever.*

F.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

No. VI.

Sandwich Islands.

This mission was established by the American Board, in 1820. It has been attended with more remarkable interpositions of providence for the time of its existence, than perhaps any other mission on record. Though familiar to many of your readers, it may be proper here to notice the astonishing change which took place at these Islands, just at the time the missionaries were embarking at Boston. To the surprise of all who had been acquainted with these Islands, the government and the people determined to abandon their idols and to commit them to the flames. The principal men had been informed of the happy effects produced by the labours and instruction of missionaries in the Society Islands, and they expressed a strong desire that missionaries should come and teach them also. Thus it was the intelligence received from time to time of the blessed results of missionary efforts nearly 3000 miles distant from them, which convinced them of the folly of their idolatrous worship and led them to consign to the flames their altars and their idols together.—All this was from the influence of missionary intelligence. At this auspicious moment, missionaries were embarking to go to them. Though this wonderful revolution seemed in a high degree favorable to the introduction of christianity; yet it remained impossible to predict what course things would take among a people without any fixed principles of action, ignorant of true religion, volatile and fickle in all their dispositions and purposes. It was therefore most joyful to all the friends of religion to learn that the missionaries at their arrival were gratefully received, and entered upon their labors with the universal approbation of both rulers and people.

In tracing the subsequent labors of these missionaries, and those, who have since been added to their number, we find that success adequate to the most sanguine expectations has attended them.—Schools have been established, and both adults and children have made good proficiency in learning to read and write. The rulers have publicly acknowledged the Sabbath, and done something to promote its observance. Mr. Whitney writes from the Island of Atooi, in January last, as follows, "The chiefs, at their own expense, have built us a very convenient house for public worship, in which I have preached regularly, in the vernacular tongue, for eight months past, twice every sabbath and occasionally on other days. Our meetings are generally well attended and many of the people are desirous of becoming acquainted with the gospel. Under our immediate inspection, we have two flourishing schools of about one hundred and twenty scholars. There are other schools in different parts of the Island.—Many more are anxious to learn, but for want of books and teachers, they must for the present be denied that privilege. Orders have been given out for all the people, without exception, on this and the neighboring Island Oneehow, to observe the Sabbath as holy time, devoted to the service of the Lord Jehovah; strictly forbidding any play or work, or even the kindling of a fire on that sacred day. Drunkenness is prohibited; and infanticide, which heretofore has been practiced to no inconsiderable extent, is now punishable with death." From other accounts given by the missionaries, it appears that the islanders begin to cherish a kind of reverence for the christian religion, which it is reasonable to expect will be succeeded by the most happy results. Several of the chiefs have prayers morning and evening in their families, constantly attend public worship, and exhibit much external reverence for divine institutions. "The nation," says one of the missionaries, "is beginning to feel the salutary influence of the gospel, and its rulers are becoming our patrons. Churches are erecting in different places, and pressing requests are made to us for labors which we are not able to afford."

Here is evidence of success beyond what could have been expected in so short a time by the most sanguine friends of Missions. What will be the effect of the recent death of the king and queen upon the nation, it is impossible to foretel. But the disposition which the natives have already manifested and the success which the missionaries have already witnessed, excite the cheering and confident hope that these Islands are already arrested from the great usurper, and that erelong the conquests of the gospel will be there, as general and as conspicuous as at the Society Islands.

Indian Missions.

The American Board have also established thirteen missionary stations among our western Indians. And a review of these missions is peculiarly gratifying to all the friends of humanity and religion, for it appears that there are few places in the heathen world in which a greater readiness is manifested to hear the word of God than among these tenants of the forest.—And upon no people surely is the obligation to send to the ignorant and destitute, more imperious, than upon the people of the United States with reference to the Aboriginal inhabitants of North America. In these, as in all other missions to the heathens, where efforts must be made to counteract inveterate habits, and to form a new character for uncivilized people, difficulties must be experienced. But that the missionaries, and the Board, and the christian public, have abundant encouragement, will be seen by a brief reference to facts. This mission was commenced in 1817. Mr. Cyrus Kingsbury entered upon this mission with a truly missionary spirit and has from the beginning borne with examplary fortitude and cheerfulness, the privations and fatigues of an untried and arduous enterprise. On his first arrival in the Cherokee nation, he was kindly received. During the first year, he wrote as follows: "Soon after our arrival in the nation, we opened our doors to receive children into our family, to teach them the rudiments of the English language, the principles of the christian religion, and the industry and arts of civilized life." With the subsequent operations of the original missionaries and those who have from time to time been sent to their aid, the christian community are generally and familiarly acquainted. I need not, therefore, enter upon details.—A summary view will be sufficient for the purpose of this number.—The labors of the missionaries, it will be remembered, have been particularly directed to the instruction of children and youth.—Schools have been established at each of the stations. The two prominent objects at which the teachers aim continually are the improvement of their pupils, by means of useful knowledge and the formation of habits of industry, both these as subsidiary to the introduction of christianity, and its ultimate prevalence. Already, more than five hundred Indian children and youth have received the rudiments of a christian education. The state of these Indian schools is very pleasing. The good order and conduct of the children has been favorably noticed by distinguished visitors.—The facility with which they learn has also been often remarked.—The President of the United States and other eminent civilians have expressed their highest approbation of the plan and operations of the missionaries, and have said they considered it the best, and perhaps the only way to civilize and christianize the Indians. The President has not only expressed his satisfaction in seeing the improvements already made in the manners and character of these long neglected natives of the soil, but has confirmed it by his liberal patronage. He was peculiarly pleased with that excellence in the management of the missionary stations, by which the pupils are not only taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, with the principles and worship inculcated in the word of God, but also, are instructed in the most useful arts of civilized life. The boys learn the use of the hoe and the axe, while the girls learn the use of the spinning wheel and the needle. And it has been found from actual experiment that they are no less tractable than the children among ourselves. There is no longer need of attempting to prove that the Indians have intellect of equal vigor with white men. Facts have already settled this point. A short acquaintance with David Brown, and many other native youth, would satisfy the most incredulous.

Under the influence of the missionaries, the Indians have made great progress, within a few years, in civilization. The Cherokees, for instance, among whom the missionaries first settled, have courts, court-houses, judges and a police, and many of them, instead of roaming the wilderness, possess comfortable houses, a herd of cattle and cultivated fields. At eight of the stations above mentioned, among the Indians, churches have been organized, and about one hundred of the natives have made a public profession of their faith in Christ. Several others are seriously disposed. The chiefs and principal men have given their influence in favor of the missionaries. Though many unprincipled white men, who pass through their nations to take advantage of them in trade, have endeavored to prejudice their minds against the missionaries, yet they are generally convinced that the missionaries are their friends and came among them to do them good.

The Indians are, many of them convinced that their former habits of living are unfavorable to their happiness. Many have wept at the remembrance of their past sins, have become prayerful, humble and examplary in their deportment and have done much by their testimony and their friendship to support the schools and the missions.

Surely the wilderness and the solitary places are beginning to be glad, and the desert to blossom as the rose. Here the ransomed of the Lord are returning and coming to Zion with songs and everlasting joy. They have obtained joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing have fled away. It is truly cheering to learn from these late savages of the forest such evidence of the constraining influence of religion on their hearts and lives. The Board were right in saying, in one of their reports, "that they and the christian public had already received an ample reward for all the toil and expense to which they have submitted, even if another immortal being should not be gathered into the fold of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls." But what has been done is only a prelude to what may be expected in future time, when the forest shall be transformed into cultivated fields, and "from almost every hill in the Indian country, shall be seen spires of churches overtopping the wilderness and imparting a religious and pleasing aspect to the whole landscape."

In estimating the success of this mission, we should not overlook the influence produced upon public opinion at home. Twelve years ago, the aborigines of our country were regarded by the great community, with the exception of a very few, as an utterly intractable race, as shut out from all human sympathies, as never to be brought into the pale of christianized society, and as doomed to become extinct. All attempts to christianize or civilize them, were considered visionary and hopeless. A spirit of extermination was breathed out against them. But now the whole nation is moved with a different spirit. All classes, with the exception of a few upon their borders, who seem determined to dispossess them of their lands or to destroy them from the earth, are moved with good will towards the Indians. They are now considered as belonging to the human family, and as worthy of human regard. To evangelize and civilize them, is now acknowledged to be both practicable and desirable. This great change in public opinion has been effected by the influence of what the American Board of Commissioners have done. The system of labors and instruction, which it has put in operation among the tribes of the forest, has conciliated the favor, and secured the confidence both of the Indians and our own people. By producing examples of Indian improvement, civilization and purity of manners, they have attracted the attention of the great community and awakened a lively interest in the attempt to raise them from their long degraded condition, to a participation of our common and distinguished blessings. Thus we see that the American Board "has not existed in vain, nor labored in vain." I close this number with an extract from one of the Society's reports. "By its several missions to heathen nations—by the cheerful sacrifices and labours of its devoted missionaries—by its disclosures of the ignorance, corruption and wretchedness of the dark places of the earth—by its successive agencies in different parts of the country, the communications it has made of intelligence with motives and excitements to benevolent action, and its various operations, at home and abroad, its endeavors and influences have conduced to the benefit of many. While they have sent the gospel abroad, the spirit of the gospel has been increased at home. Especially has it been so, if by them the Monthly Concert of prayer, which is connected in a particular manner with missions to the heathen, has been promoted and extended—and if these extensively united prayers and alms have gone up with acceptance before God, and in answer to them, in any measure, he has granted those plenteous effusions of his spirit with which many of our churches have been so signally blessed." W.

ANSWER TO A QUESTION.

Messrs. Editors.

In your number for January, I observe the following question:—"How can it be accounted for, that many persons seem to *desire* religion, who exhibit *no evidence of possessing it?*" This question assumes, that many persons *do* seem to desire religion, who still exhibit no evidence of possessing it. The assumption is, I doubt not, agreeable to fact. It is by no means uncommon, to find those, who are manifestly destitute of religion, professing to desire it, and to be seeking after it, nearly all their lives. And nothing is more common, in seasons of revival, than to see impenitent sinners awakened to a sense of the importance of religion, to feel their need of it, and to think they desire it. Very often they express these desires in the strongest terms, and declare that they would willingly make any sacrifice, or undergo any privation, if they might only be the subjects of true religion. Instances of the same nature are continually occurring among the *sick* and the *dying*. Sinners are sensible that they have but a short time to live, and that they are destitute of that religion, which alone can prepare them to die; and under these impressions, they beg and pray for themselves, and beg others to pray for them, that they might be brought to the possession and enjoyment of real piety.

It will not at all satisfy persons, under these circumstances, to tell them that they do not desire religion. They feel and think they know that they do desire it, and often with the utmost earnestness and ardour. And yet they are satisfied themselves, and all who are acquainted with them have reason to be satisfied, that they do not possess it. The question now is, How shall all this be accounted for? Religion is represented as having its seat, in the desires or affections of the soul.—Consequently, a true and holy desire of religion is religion itself; and persons are in fact the possessors of it, as soon as they, in this sense, desire it. "How then, can it be accounted for, that many persons seem to desire religion," and in some sense doubtless do desire it, "who yet exhibit no evidence of possessing it?"

The grand reason for this, as it seems to me, is, the persons in question do not love or desire religion for what it is in itself, but merely for the benefits which they believe it will confer. They desire it, not as a primary good, but only as a means of securing some other good. They believe, it may be, that religion alone is capable of conferring happiness in the *present life;* and consequently, as they desire to be happy, they desire to possess religion.—Or they believe, that this alone will enable them to die in peace, and will conduct them to rest beyond the grave; and as they wish to die in peace, and to be happy forever, they are earnest in their wishes and endeavors to obtain religion. I am satisfied the *hearts* of those, who are conscious of desiring religion, while they do not possess it, will testify that this is the ground on which they desire it. They desire it only as a *secondary* object—as a means of securing other and better things; and did they not believe it a necessary means of securing the benefits they have in view, they would neither think of it, nor pretend to have any desire for it.

Now persons must be sensible, on a moment's reflection, that there is no virtue in desiring religion on such grounds; and that desires of this nature furnish no sufficient claim or reason why they should ever possess it. They desire religion, very much as those desired the presence of the Savior, who followed him merely for the loaves and fishes. They cared nothing about him, and were ready to desert him on the slightest rebuke; but they loved the *good things* which they had seen he was able to bestow. Suppose, my readers, that either of you were treated, as those treat religion, who desire it merely for the benefits it confers. Suppose you had persons flattering and fawning around you, and making extravagant professions of regard, who, you certainly knew, cared nothing about you, and only wished to obtain a favor for themselves. Would you consider such persons as entitled to your love, and worthy to be received to the bosom of your friendship? Or could you forbear despising them in your heart? Yet such persons are as fairly entitled to your love, as those are to be made the possessors of religion, who desire it merely for the benefits it confers. Persons of this latter description have often thought it strange and hard, when they have manifested so much regard for religion, and have desired it so earnestly, and so long, that still they have never been able to possess it. But they have no reason to think it either strange or hard. *Why* have they desired religion? Merely, as their own consciences testify—merely for the loaves and fishes—merely for the benefits it is believed to confer. Their desires of it, therefore, are perfectly selfish; and instead of furnishing a reason why they should be made the possessors of religion, they furnish a sufficient reason, why they should be disowned and rejected of God.

True religion is perfect moral excellence and lovelines, *in itself.* It is worthy to be loved and valued, and by all its real friends, it is loved and valued on its *own account.* Such would desire and love it, even were it attended by no personal benefits. Yea, they would desire and love it, were it followed by persecutions and afflictions, rather than by blessings. Until religion is loved in this way, it is not truly loved at all; and until it is desired in this way, our desires of it are perfectly consistent with our living, and dying in destitution of its comforts and hopes.

The solution of the question, which has here been given, is recommended to the special consideration of those persons, whose case is exhibited in the question itself. This class, I think, is a numerous and, on some accounts, a very respectable one. They feel the importance of religion—feel, at times, a painful sense of their *need* of it—and are disposed to treat it with all external marks of respect. They think they earnestly desire it, and are diligently seeking it. They have desired and sought it, it may be, for a long time; and think it strange that they have always been disappointed. Now the remarks which have been made are intended to satisfy such persons *why* they have been disappointed. It is not because they have regarded religion as altogether undesirable, but because they have desired it from *improper motives.* Your own consciences testify, that you have never seen its intrinsic loveliness and beauty, and have never loved or desired it, on its *own account*; but solely on account of the *benefits*, in this life, in death, and in the world to come, which you supposed were connected with it. You have desired it, therefore, as the sick man does his medicine, not because you had a heart to relish it, but because you believed it would do you good. But you cannot seriously suppose there is any virtue in desiring religion in this way, or that such desires, however earnest, or however long indulged, furnish a sufficient reason why you should possess it.—If you would possess religion, you must learn to love it, for what it *is.* It is a most desirable thing *in itself.* It is perfect moral excellence—the perfection of moral loveliness and beauty. Why then should you not love and value it, on its *own account?* The moment you are conscious of doing this, you may begin to hope that you feel as you ought, and that religion is yours.

I hope the remarks which have been made, may lead my christian readers to inquire, on what *their* professed regard for religion is founded. Do you esteem and love it, for what it *is?* Or are you attached to it solely on account of the *benefits* which you expect to derive from it? You will not understand me as saying, that *no* regard is to be had to the rich and everlasting benefits which flow from our religion. Happiness is desirable in itself; and none of us ought to be indifferent respecting our present, future, and eternal welfare. But happiness is not more desirable than holiness; and the blessings expected to result from religion are not more desirable than religion itself. Do we then desire to be holy, as well as happy? And do we love and prize religion, on account of its own intrinsic loveliness? Or is it with us a mere secondary object? This subject, christian brethren, is worth our attention. Our characters, in the sight of God, depend, you know, entirely on the character of our affections; and may even be said to depend entirely, on the kind of regard we cherish for true religion. P.

QUESTION.

Messrs. Editors.

A reader of your valuable Magazine, would be highly gratified with an answer to the following question:

Ought a wife to refrain from making a public profession of religion, in consequence of being forbidden by her husband?

From the Utica Christian Repository.

EXPERIENCE OF MISS A.

Believing it to be a duty, as far as possible, to perpetuate the impression made upon the mind by those events which remarkably display the power and goodness of God, and to extend the knowledge of them for the benefit of others, I now attempt to commit to paper an account of a work of grace, to which I was a witness.

A religious excitement having just commenced in the school, of which Miss A. was a member, she observed, while reading her lesson in history, that one of her class mates was reading the bible; and, not feeling the necessity of attending to the concerns of the soul, thought that this young lady might as well learn her lesson as be spending her time in that manner. This thought was in a few moments struck home upon her conscience, in such a manner, as to prevent her finishing her own lesson. Her distress, though severe, was manifested during the first two or three days, only by a sadness of countenance, and an utter neglect of that business and those pleasures which had before occupied her attention. Like most other persons with whom the Holy Spirit is striving, she had recourse to the scriptures, attendance on religious meetings, and the like. Her conviction of sin, which at first seemed to be a confused impression that something was wrong, became daily more clear; she became sensible of the wickedness, hardness, and obstinacy of her heart; saw that her only hope of safety was submission to Christ; and that the only difficulty was an unwillingness on her part, to give herself up to him. She often reviewed her past life, in order to find something that would stand before God in judgment; some reason why she should not be condemned; but could find none. At bed time, on Friday, which was the fourth day, instead of retiring to rest, she retired to a dark and solitary apartment, and was discovered sitting by an almost fireless stove, sometimes crying aloud, sometimes uttering a low and involuntary shriek at every breath, and literally trembling and quaking under a sense of her sins and the wrath of God. The burden of her complaint was her "wicked and hard heart;" often exclaiming, "what *can* I do with such a heart?" At 12 o'clock, she retired to her chamber, and after pulling off one shoe, was so overcome with a view of her own character, as to sink upon the bed, without any further preparation, and spent the remainder of that sleepless night, experiencing all the horrors of an awakened conscience. It is not known that any particular alteration took place in her feelings during Saturday, though it was apparent that her distress was, on the whole, increasing. On Sunday morning, a printed card was handed to her, containg a dialogue of considerable length, between the Bible and the Sinner. This was read by her with great attention; she was led to see that she was just such a sinner as was there described; and that there was no hope in her case, except in an immediate compliance with the terms of salvation. In this great struggle of mind, she was enabled to resolve, as she expressed it, "to give up or perish that night." She remembered all the warnings she had formerly received; remembered that the Holy Spirit had striven with her at various times—was convinced that this was the last call—thought it would be no consolation to live a few years longer, accumulating a load of guilt, and to perish at last, as she certainly must, if she persisted in obstinacy and rebellion. "But how could she get rid of her wicked heart? How could she give up and come to Christ?" So stubborn was her spirit that to resolve to give herself up to God, was like tearing limb from limb; but her danger was so manifested, as to drive her to this resolution. In this state of mind, she went to the house of God and heard a sermon from Rom. 7. 12, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Every word of the sermon fell upon her conscience with a weight which, she said "seemed to press her to her seat. The load of her sins was a burden, under which she felt unable to rise." Some time after nine o'clock in the evening, she was asked whether she felt as if she could retire to rest; she said "No, not with such a wicked heart as she had." She was answered, that "it was indeed a dreadful thing to sleep with a heart at enmity with God." Soon after this, her distress increased so much as to give itself vent in cries and shrieks, incessantly repeating, "What can I do with such a wicked heart?" When asked if she could not hate her wicked heart, she answered, "I wish I could." Once she exclaimed, with a degree of horror never to be described or imagined, "*must* I give up?" It appeared that the necessity of submitting to Christ was perdition itself begun in her soul. She was asked if she could not cry to her Savior for mercy? She then cried almost incessantly, for more than half an hour, "Jesus have mercy," &c. But it was a bitter cry, extorted by agony of soul, and not the effusions of a contrite spirit. Between eleven and twelve, she sunk into silence—the silence of that anguish which has exhausted its subject without being diminished. From a good state of health she was now so reduced as to be unable to walk. She continued silent about two hours, except to answer a few questions. Very little was said, for all who witnessed the scene were led, in this extremity, to see the entire impotency of all human efforts. It was God who had wounded, and he alone could heal. It being evident that her bodily strength was almost exhausted; some refreshment was offered her which she refused with a look and tone of horror, undoubtedly surpassed by spirits in the prison of despair, but probably never equalled on earth, except by those whose anguish may have proceeded from the same cause as her own. In a few minutes after this, she broke out into such loud groans and cries as waked some members of the family, who were asleep in distant apartments. In this memorable hour, never to be recollected by those present, but with the strongest emotions, God appeared, wonderful in goodness and mighty in power. At a time when all intelligences on earth, and saints and angels in heaven united, could not have given her a moment's peace, God filled her soul with joy unspeakable. Sudden as a flash of lightning, she exclaimed, "I am the Lord's; He says I may come; Praise the Lord; Alleluia: Amen." And, at the same time, fell into the arms of her female friends, who were sitting near. Her strength and color were entirely gone—her eyes, closed—and, for a few minutes, a pulse was the only indication that the new-born soul was not really departing from its clayey tenement. Soon she revived, and exclaimed, "Jesus—there he is—I see him—my Redeemer, crucified for me!" Then, with a loud voice, "Glory to God," several times repeated. "Jesus took me by the hand and said I was his;—Yes, yes, Jesus take me; I am thine; here I am; take me." Being asked whether she wished to go then to Jesus, or remain a while in this world, she answered, "I am ready to go now; yes, Jesus, I am ready;" accompanied with a look and manner, which words are too poor to express. Her hands alternately clasped together, and then raised towards heaven. Her countenance, her smile, and even her laugh, could be compared to nothing earthly, and indicated that heaven itself was begun in her soul. Her penitence was expressed by most pathetically exclaiming, "How *could* I do so;—why did not I give up sooner? Christ was waiting to receive me all that time, and I refused to come to him." Two other persons present were under deep convictions, one of whom broke out into loud and convulsive sobs and groans. To her she said, calling her by name, "Prepare to meet your God; appoint a time when you will meet your God; don't cry and groan so—tears and groans will *never* save you; come to Jesus; he is waiting to receive you; don't stand it out as long as I did." Some one spoke of that distress as the fruit of sin. "*Sin!*" she exclaimed, with uncommon vehemence, and as if speaking to all present, "*tread it under your feet.*" And after a short pause, "*tremble before God.*"

Being again offered a cordial, she replied, "Christ is enough—Christ is enough. I have starved my poor soul almost to death."—A relative of her's being mentioned, she asked, in a hurried manner, "Where is he?" She was answered, that he was in a certain place asleep. "Asleep in his *sins*," she exclaimed, "Lord, don't let him rest!" When one observed that *that* room and that spot would be ever dear to her, she replied, "not *near* so dear as Jesus is." To those present, who were professed followers of Christ, she said, in the most endearing and affectionate manner; "Now I'll go with you." She spoke with the greatest apparent delight of uniting with her pious schoolmates, at their next stated meeting for prayer. These, and many other expressions of similar import, succeeded each other as fast as her exhausted state would allow, during two hours that she lay in the position in which she first fell. The awful interest of this scene was vastly heightened not only by the contrast of her present with her former feelings, but also by contrasting her with the two other individuals present, who were the subjects of deep convictions, one of whom sat in silent distress, while the other, whose face seemed almost to gather blackness, gave vent to her anguish, as has been before described. During the whole of this night, few loud words were spoken, except in supplications at the throne of mercy, by those whose privilege it was to be witnesses of the scene. The awful solemnity of it was not interrupted by any noise or agitation; all were impressed with a sense that supplication and silent adoration was their only business; for *God was there.*

Her subsequent account of her feelings, at the time of the change was this; that she was brought to see the gulf of perdition open before her, her feet upon the slippery brink, and herself, indeed, sliding down! *Then*, and *not till then*, she was willing to lay hold on the only hope! *Then* and *not till then*, she was willing to give herself into the Savior's arms, which were open to receive her! Her view of the yawning gulf, her turning to God as the only refuge, and her subsequent joy, were instantaneous. Her own expression was, " when the sinner will give up, how quick the Lord can give comfort!" She thought she saw the Savior in a bodily form; his rich grace and glory so filled her enraptured soul, as to produce the effects already attempted to be described, and which language has no power to express. It was the opinion of those present, and of herself, also, that the manifestation of perdition and glory—of wrath and of love—was as great as her mortal frame could sustain; that one more pang of conviction, or one more ray of glory, would have dissolved this clay, and have set the spirit free that animated it. It may perhaps be proper to observe, that her strength was so reduced as to confine her to the bed for nearly a week.

This protracted narrative shall be closed with a few brief reflections, which this instructive event naturally suggested.

1. It was a most clear illustration of those passages of scripture which impute the fault of man's impenitence entirely to his own will. That disposition which exists in all hearts—which is hidden from themselves, in most, was by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, rendered perfectly clear in hers. It was a glass, in which all who desire to see themselves, may look and be convinced.

2. It is probable, that even in this case, but a very small part of the enmity and obstinacy of the heart was manifested; as much as she could bear, was all that God showed her. If so, the heart must indeed be " deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

3. Man can, and probably will, turn to God, when he sees himself stripped of all other hopes.

4. If perdition consists in a sense of sin, and the anger of God against it, and if the small degree of this which man can bear in this world be so inexpressibly dreadful, even for one night, what must be an eternity of wo, where the full vials of God's wrath will be poured out without mixture forever and ever, and not a gleam of hope allowed to enter!

5. If sin be the procuring cause of such torment in this world, and in the world to come, then surely it is a bitter thing, and every man ought to spend his whole life in striving against it; and, finally, if a momentary foretaste of heaven fill the soul with such joy, what must heaven itself be, and how good that God who has prepared such a mansion for his repenting children; and that Savior who has died that we might inherit it.—Hear and understand. R.

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SERMON.

JOHN, XXI. 17.—*And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.*

The third time that Christ appeared to his disciples after his crucifixion, he dined with them; and after they had dined and were sitting together in free and familiar conversation, Christ turned to Peter and addressed him in this free and affectionate manner: "Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me. And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Peter plainly perceived by Christ's putting the question the third time, that he had reference to his denying him thrice, which cut him to the heart. It is now natural to inquire, how Peter could sincerely make such a solemn profession of love to Christ? Christ repeatedly asked him whether he loved him, and Peter as often replied, without hesitation or reserve, in the affirmative, and appealed to him as the Searcher of hearts, for the truth of his declaration—"Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." It seems, that Peter must have had some solid foundation, upon which to make such a solemn profession of supreme love to Christ, whom he had so lately forsaken and profanely denied before his mortal enemies. He had given great occasion not only to Christ, but to his fellow disciples, to call his sincerity in question. He had been almost as guilty in *denying* Christ, as Judas had been in *betraying* him. How then could he obtain clear and satisfactory evidence to himself that he loved Christ sincerely and supremely?

To answer this question is the main design of the present discourse. Here then I would observe,

I. Peter had true love to Christ.

When he called him to be his disciple, he instantaneously and cheerfully obeyed his call. And while he attended Christ in the course of his ministry, he frequently expressed a supreme love to him When some of Christ's nominal disciples disapproved his doctrines and forsook him, Peter remained firm and unshaken in his attachments to his person and doctrines. It is said, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?—Then Simon Peter anwered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.—And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God." By this profession, Peter manifested his sincere love to Christ, and his firm trust and confidence in him as the only and all-sufficient Savior. And so he did on another occasion, when Christ questioned his disciples respecting their faith. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say, that I the Son of man, am? And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist; some say Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus anwered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Here Christ not only approves of Peter's faith in speculation, but represents it as flowing from a special divine illumination, which stamps his character as a true believer. And this appears to have been his real character, from another declaration of his, connected with Christ's promise to him. When the disciples heard the remark which Christ made upon the rich young man, who had left him sorrowful, "they were exceedingly amazed, saying Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the *regeneration*, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Thus Christ repeatedly pronounced Peter to be a friend to truth and an heir of glory, which puts it beyond doubt, that he loved him supremely. Besides, Christ treated Peter with peculiar respect.—Whenever he selected any of his disciples to attend him on particular occasions, Peter was always one of the number. Peter, James and John attended him on the mount of transfiguration, and in his agonies in the garden. Christ loved Peter and Peter loved Christ, with a sincere and ardent affection. He was willing to part with all things for Christ, and even to lay down his life for him. This he manifested at the trying time, when his enemies came to apprehend him. He smote off the ear of the high priest's servant; and had not Christ restrained him, he would undoubtedly have persisted in his defence, until he had either dispersed his enemies, or fallen by their hands. Thus it appears that Peter did really love Christ sincerely and supremely. This leads me to observe,

II. That Peter's love to Christ was essentially different from all the selfish affections of his heart. True love to Christ is disinterested and supreme, and consequently distinct from, and opposite to, every unholy and selfish exercise of the true believer. This Christ taught at different times and in different forms. He said, "no man can serve God and Mammon." "He said no man can be his disciple, unless he loves him more than father or mother, brother or sister wife or children, houses or lands, or even his own life." And he applied this doctrine practically. When a very amiable young man came to him, to know what he must do to inherit eternal life, he taught him to exercise *pure disinterested* love. Such an affection as this is entirely different from any unholy, selfish affection. Peter's supreme love to Christ was totally distinct and different from any unholy, selfish affection. By nature he was like all other men by nature, totally depraved and under the entire dominion of selfishness. Whenever it was that he became a friend to Christ, his affections were changed from what they were in the state of nature.—His gracious affections never harmonized with his sinful ones, but created a sensible warfare in his own breast, by which he could distinguish them from each other. The moral discernment which he had as a moral agent, enabled him to perceive the moral difference between his sincere and supreme love to Christ, and all the other exercises of his mind. When Christ was in view, and his mind was fixed on his person and character, he could sensibly feel those affections towards him, which he never felt towards any other person or object. When he was conversing with him, he could enjoy a pleasure and satisfaction, which was different from, and superior to, all other enjoyments. He could sensibly prefer him before all created objects. He could feel a willingness to deny himself of any thing and every thing, to promote his cause and interest in the world. He could be conscious that he was willing to die with him, or for him. In a word, so often as he loved Christ supremely he could distinguish his love to him from all other feelings and exercises of his heart. On supposition, that he did actually love Christ supremely, we may easily conceive of his plainly distinguishing his holy, from his unholy affections. When many of Christ's disciples went back and followed him no more, and when he put the trying question to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Then Peter's love to him was put to the severest test, and found sincere. "Simon Peter then answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.—And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." At that time Peter could, and undoubtedly did, distinguish his love to Christ from every unholy, selfish affection that had ever existed in his heart. And therefore,

III. When he had distinguished his supreme love to Christ from all his sinful affections, he knew that his sinful affections did not prove that he had not the true love of Christ in him. Our Savior never taught, that none could love him sincerely and supremely, unless they were absolutely free from all the remains of moral corruption. Nor is it a doctrine of the gospel that sinful affections are a conclusive evidence, that a person never loved Christ in sincerity. Though Peter found, by unhappy experience, that he was far from being free from the bondage of sin, and had frequently offended his Savior, yet he knew, that this did not prove he had never given him the supreme place in his heart.—He knew, that Christ had repeatedly reproved him, and especially by his *significant look*, after he had denied him thrice. But yet he was conscious, that notwithstanding all his remaining, moral imperfection, Christ was the supreme object of his affection. Hence he knew that his moral imperfection did not destroy the evidence of his being a sincere friend to Christ. If the least moral imperfection could destroy the hope of a saint, it would be difficult to find a real saint in the Bible. For the best of men, whose characters are there recorded, manifested and lamented their moral imperfection and the native contrariety of their hearts to God. Paul says, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And the apostle John says in the name of all christians, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Peter, as well as Paul, had a right to consider himself a sincere friend and follower of Christ, notwithstanding his moral imperfection. Besides,

IV. Peter's supreme love to Christ was a positive evidence of his being his real friend, and destroyed all other evidence against it. Sinful affections are an evidence of men's being enemies to Christ. And under certain circumstances they are an infallible evidence of it. Thus the sinful affections of all unrenewed persons are infallible evidence, that they love not the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. And indeed sinful affections are always an evidence, that men are in the state of nature; unless this evidence is destroyed by the opposite evidence of supreme love to Christ. But whenever supreme love to Christ takes place in the heart, *and is discovered;* then it totally destroys the evidence of a graceless state, arising from sinful exercises. According to scripture, one exercise of real holiness or supreme love to Christ, constitutes a real saint. And when any person is conscious, that he has such a holy affection, he has the witness in himself, that he has the spirit of Christ and is one of his. This evidence Peter had in his favor. He had loved Christ supremely and knew that he had loved him supremely; of course, he knew that Christ knew that he was his real friend. On this ground he could humbly and confidently say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." It is very likely that Peter was in the most sensible exercise of sincere love to Christ, when he put and repeated the question, "Simon son of Jonas lovest thou me?" For he was sitting with Christ and his disciples while they were freely and pleasingly conversing about the great and glorious things of Christ's kingdom. Peter had often reflected upon his ingratitude and baseness in denying Christ. He had wept bitterly for it. And the more he saw and conversed with Christ, the more tender, humble, and affectionate he felt towards him. We may, therefore, naturally suppose, that he answered his question from the fulness of his heart, and an immediate consciousness of a supreme love to his person and cause. And on this ground, he had a right to make the solemn profession in the text; for such sensible exercises of supreme love to Christ, totally destroyed the evidence of his being a hypocrite or false professor, arising from his forsaking and denying him. In the actual and sensible exercises of supreme love to Christ, he could, with propriety and confidence, appeal to Christ and say, "Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

This subject now suggests several useful reflections.

I. It appears from the character and conduct of Peter, that all real christians may have satisfactory evidence that they are so. Peter was a real christian, for he loved Christ sincerely and supremely, and he knew that he loved him so, which gave him satisfactory evidence of his being in the state of grace and favor with Christ. Peter had not already attained, neither was he already perfect; but with all his moral imperfections, he knew that he was a subject of grace

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and real friend to his Saviour. He knew, that he loved him, not from mercenary, but from pure, disinterested motives. He knew that he had been selfish and like the other disciples had wished to know who should be greatest in the kingdom of Christ; but he could distinguish such selfish feelings from his pure, supreme love of Christ. His selfish affections were a foil to discover and distinguish the nature of his pure, holy, disinterested affections, and instead of being an evidence against his sincerity, were an evidence in favor of it. Now, if Peter, notwithstanding all his moral imperfections, could have satisfactory evidence of being a real christian, then all other real christians may have satisfactory evidence that they are such. They, like Peter, do in reality love Christ supremely, and may know, as he did, that they do love Christ supremely, and of course, may know that they are his real friends. Peter had moral imperfections and great moral imperfections, but he could and did distinguish his holy, from his unholy affections. And every real christian, as well as Peter, may distinguish his holy, from his unholy affections, and thereby gain satisfactory evidence, that he is a real friend to Christ and entitled to eternal life, notwithstanding all his moral imperfections. All real christians are imperfect in this life, and if they could not distinguish their holy, from their unholy affections, it would be impossible for them, to have clear, satisfactory evidence of their gracious state as long as they live in this world. Grace is an infallible evidence of grace, and all real christians have this infallible evidence in their favor, whether they know it or not. There are, undoubtedly, many real christians, who have this evidence in their favor; that are involved in darkness and doubts, whether they have received the grace of God in truth; but they have the infallible evidence of grace in their own hearts, and might discover it, notwithstanding all their moral defects and short comings in duty. Though they may have greater moral imperfections than Peter, or Paul had; yet they have the witness in their hearts that they love Christ supremely, which counterbalances and sets aside all evidence to the contrary. If they would only examine their hearts critically and impartially, they might discover and distinguish their holy affections from all unholy ones, and gain satisfactory evidence that they have been born of God and are the children of grace.

2. If Peter could have clear, satisfactory evidence, that he was a real christian; then sinners must have clear and convincing evidence, that they are not christians. Peter knew that he was a sinner, before he became a christian. He knew, that he loved himself solely and supremely, which was a violation of the first

and great commandment of the law, which he had often read, and which required him to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength. But after he became a christian, he knew that he loved Christ supremely, and was a christian. While he was a sinner, he had a conscience or moral sense, which constrained him to distinguish wrong from right, and selfishness from benevolence; and all sinners have the same faculty of distinguishing the nature of their moral exercises. "Every imagination of the thoughts of their heart is evil and only evil continually." Every one of their moral exercises is altogether selfish and sinful, for which their consciences condemn them. This is an infallible evidence, that they are the enemies, and not the friends, of God. Some sinners do think they are christians. Those who loved Christ for the loaves and followed him awhile, thought that they were his real friends; but they were entirely deceived. Some moral, regular, amiable sinners now think they are christians, but they are deceiving themselves. They have not the least evidence that they love Christ supremely, for all their moral exercises are entirely selfish and criminal.—They might know, that they love themselves and the world supremely, if they would only look into their hearts and critically compare all their moral exercises with the law of love. Paul might have certainly known that he was a sinner, while he thought he was doing God service. He was then a real enemy to Christ, to his cause, and to his friends. This he had complete evidence of, but he would not see it. This is true of all sinners, without a single exception. Their hearts are evil, and full of evil, without a single exercise of pure, disinterested love, and therefore they might know that they are enemies to God and all righteousness.

3. It appears from the case of Peter, that none ought to remain in a state of uncertainty, as to their spiritual state. All know, that they are either saints, or sinners. If they are saints, they may have satisfactory evidence, that they are subjects of grace; and if they are sinners, they may have as satisfactory evidence, that they are totally destitute of grace. It is not a matter of indifference, whether they are saints, or sinners; nor is it a matter of indifference, whether they know that they are saints, or that they are sinners. A state of uncertainty is not only an unhappy, but a sinful and dangerous state. As all may know what their spiritual state is, so it must be owing to a sinful neglect of duty in all, who remain in a state of uncertainty. So long as they continue in such a state, they can neither read the Bible, nor hear the Gospel preached, with propriety or profit. Doubting saints are in danger of applying the threatenings in the gospel

to themselves; and doubting sinners are in danger of applying the promises of the gospel to themselves. Doubting saints are in danger of delaying to profess Christ before men, and doubting sinners are in greater danger of making a false profession. The remaining depravity of saints, and the total depravity of sinners, lead both to take the same method, to keep themselves in the state of uncertainty. They both run into and lose themselves in the wide field of possibility. The doubting saint says to himself, I think I sometimes love Christ sincerely and supremely; but I may be mistaken. It appears from the bible, that a great many have thought that they loved Christ sincerely and supremely, but they deceived themselves, for they had not the love of Christ in them; and it is *possible*, that I may deceive myself in the same manner. The doubting sinner says to himself, I think I love Christ sincerely and supremely sometimes, though I have much evidence to the contrary. But many good men have said they had doubts and fears about their gracious state; and therefore, it is possible, that I may be a good man, though I have doubts and fears. This mode of reasoning in both saints and sinners, tends to keep them in doubt and uncertainty as long as they live. The saint may always ask himself, Am I not a self-deceived sinner? And the sinner may always ask himself, Am I not a self-deceived or doubting saint? This mode of thinking and reasoning looks plausible; but it is a mere delusion of the great deceiver?—No man has a right to ask himself whether it be not possible, that he should be deceived *about what he knows*. No man has a right to ask himself, when he *knows* he sees the sun in a clear day, whether he is not deceived. It is impossible, that a man should be deceived about what he *knows*. When a saint has supreme love to Christ and *knows* it, he cannot be deceived; and when a sinner has a heart full of evil, and *knows* it, he cannot be deceived. Saints ought to judge of their own character, by what they know passes in their own hearts; and sinners ought to judge of their own character, by what passes in their own hearts. The scripture takes it for granted, that saints may know their own hearts, and that sinners may know their own hearts, and accordingly requires all men to know whether they are saints, or sinners, and forbids them to remain in uncertainty, as to their spiritual state. Paul says to christians, "Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your ownselves. Know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." Peter says, "Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Peter knew, that christians could know their own hearts, for he knew his own heart, and he also knew that he loved Christ supremely. He knew, that christians have no right, nor occasion, to live in uncertainty, as to their spiritual state. It is not a duty, but a sin, for any to doubt, whether they are saints or sinners, for they may come, and ought to come to a certainty upon this most interesting subject. It is to be feared, that there are not a few doubting saints, and doubting sinners in this place, who seriously think, that they are doing their duty, by doubting. But if they would do their duty, what occasion would they have for doubting? Let them love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and they could have no more occasion for doubting than Peter had, and he had none. This subject calls upon doubting christians, to put away their doubts, and come to the table of Christ, and it as loudly calls upon doubting sinners to put away their doubts, by immediate repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him. If your souls be infinitely precious, secure their salvation. If delays be dangerous, beware of delaying. If some of you delay much longer, your delay must be fatal. But this subject more particularly calls upon the professors of religion, to search and try the state of their minds, previously to their coming to the communion table, where Christ will be invisibly present; and though he may not by an audible voice put the question to any individual, which he put to Peter "Lovest thou me?" yet he will as critically watch the heart of every one, as he watched the heart of Peter. The question now is, are you as willing that Christ should know your hearts, as Peter was that he should know his? If you are, it will be but a small thing to be judged by man's judgment, if you can sincerely appeal to Christ, and say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." If you know that you love Christ, you may know that Christ loves you. And if you have once loved Christ, you may know that he will always love you, though like Peter's your love and faith may sometimes fail. Be entreated then to keep the feast, not with old leaven of mercenary love, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

DIVINE EFFICIENCY.

The doctrine of divine agency as exerted upon the hearts of sinners in regeneration, and upon the hearts of saints in all their holy exercises is so plainly taught, and so fully believed that nothing need be said in support of it. But another view of the doctrine, very nearly connected with this, as it respects the great end of both, which is the glory of God, meets with much opposition. I mean the doctrine of Divine agency exerted upon the hearts of wicked men. It is said that it tarnishes the character of the Deity, which should ever be kept pure and spotless; that it infringes the liberty of the sinful agent; and that it destroys the use of means to reclaim the impenitent.

I shall not attempt to prove that God does operate upon the minds of the wicked. I think the Bible has made this sufficiently evident. But I wish candidly to state some of the reasons which I have, for not receiving the objections which are made to this doctrine.

Obj. 1. It makes God a sinner. I do not receive this objection as valid, because I believe that God may have a good end in view, in the same wicked conduct, in which men have a bad end in view. I believe that this was the case when Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt. They meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. This was the case when Pharaoh held the children of Israel in bondage in opposition to the Divine command, God caused him to conduct so, that his great name might be declared throughout all the earth. But he had a very different end in view. In these instances I do not see that any thing took place strange in the Divine conduct. Doubtless God pursues, substantially, the same conduct in respect to all the actions of wicked men. And it is enough, forever to free the Deity from the imputation of guilt, if he performs all his actions for a good end. What more than this could benevolence desire? And with what less could it be satisfied?

Obj. 2. The doctrine infringes the liberty of the agent. I understand this objection to be, that if God causes a being to act, that being cannot act freely. I believe that God causes us to be free. In order that the objection should stand, it ought to be shown that God cannot cause a being to be free.—For if the objector admits that it is possible that God can cause a being to be free; he admits that possibly, the objection has no foundation. Why is not this brought as an objection to the freedom of the *christian?* Those very persons who say that positive Divine efficiency destroys the liberty of the sinner, acknowledge that the saint acts under a positive Divine agency; and yet, that he acts freely. Now, is it any more difficult for God, by his agency, to cause a sinner to act freely, than it is for him to cause a saint to act freely? Is it any more difficult for us to conceive of freedom in the one case, than in the other? If not, why bring the objection, that it destroys freedom in one case, when it is acknowledged that it is not destroyed in the other?

Obj. 3. It destroys the use of means. And why does it not destroy the use of means when applied to the christian? I ask the objector to show, if he can, why means are not as important, when applied to the impenitent sinner;

on the supposition that God is the efficient cause of all his exercises, as they are when applied to the christian, on the supposition that God is the cause of all his holy exercises? To be consistent, the objector must deny the use of means in both cases, or hold to them in both.

I will conclude with a word on the manner in which those who make the foregoing objections, interpret a certain part of scripture. They think those texts which assert positive Divine efficiency in the case of wicked men, need to be modified. "God hardened Pharaoh's heart." This is said to be similar to the passage, "Solomon built the temple." The idea, fully expressed, is this; as Solomon built the temple by employing others to do the work, so God hardened Pharaoh's heart by employing others to do it. In my view, this is as much as to say, if it is proper to ascribe to one *man* what another *man* does, then it is proper to ascribe to *God* what *man* does. I know of no rules, either of logic or of interpretation, which allow of such licence. Other men possess the same powers and capacities to labor which Solomon possessed. But between the Creator and a frail creature, there is no such similarity. This explanation is taking such liberty with the scripture as would not be allowed to be taken with any profane author. And when an opinion must be supported by such reasoning, I strongly suspect that opinion to be false.

ORANGE.

REVIEW OF MR. POND'S CONCERT LECTURES.

Short Missionary Discourses, or Monthly Concert Lectures. By Enoch Pond, A. M. Pastor of the Church in Ward, Mass.

Most of these Lectures, it appears, were originally designed for the edification and improvement of "that little band of christian friends, who usually assemble with the author at the Monthly Concert of Prayer." One object of their publication is, "to render this important season more interesting and profitable" to the churches generally which are in the practice of observing it, especially when they are deprived of the assistance of Clergymen, and when, although Clergymen may be present, nothing new, or of special interest, occurs to diversify the meeting. But the ultimate object of the work is the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, by exciting among the churches a deeper interest, and more vigorous exertion in the cause of Missions. Such an object is certainly worthy of the talents and exertion of the respectable author. Although much has been done, and much is now doing in various ways, to increase and direct the zeal of christians in the dissemination of the gospel; yet so important is this object, and so much remains still to be done, that every new and well directed effort to accomplish it, is a just cause of gratitude and joy to the friends of the Redeemer. When we consider the millions that are now enveloped in pagan darkness, the foolish and cruel superstitions which hold the empire of their minds, and the fact that the gospel is the divinely appointed means of their present improvement and future salvation, the cause of missions presents itself in an attitude of importance, which no language can fully describe. That man, who, in view of the present state of the heathen, does not feel the importance of missionary exertion, certainly does not himself know the divine excellence of the gospel. He surely must be a stranger to the religion of Christ, who does not desire that its saving efficacy may be known by all the children of men. An attempt to spread the gospel abroad in the earth, is one of the most rational, dignified, and God-like enterprises, in which a creature was ever engaged. From this, including in it all necessary exertion to water the seed of the divine word wherever it has already been sown, a higher degree of intellectual and moral improvement, and a better preparation for the present and future happiness of mankind may be expected, than from any, yea, than from all other means. We do, therefore, highly appreciate the efforts of those who attempt to enlighten the christian public in regard to this important duty. It is not, we are persuaded, yet duly considered. Many of those who are favored with the gospel are strangely unmindful of its value, and regardless of the wretched condition of others who are deprived of its light. There are those who attempt to *pray* for the conversion and salvation of the heathen, who it is to be feared, are not only heartless and faithless in their prayers, but unmindful of the important duties which are necessarily *implied* in an acceptible prayer for them. The christian public need to have their attention *often* drawn to the subject of missions, their obligation to aid them frequently enforced, and all the encouragement to engagedness in this good work which can be derived from the promises of God, and the example and success of his faithful servants both in ancient and modern times, kept constantly before them. It is peculiarly desirable that those who statedly assemble for the purpose of offering their united prayers for the salvation of the heathen, and for the general enlargement and prosperity of Zion, should have understandings well informed in regard to the object of their solicitude, and hearts warmly engaged for the attainment of it. The object of our author, both in delivering and publishing his Concert Lectures, is therefore a great and a good object.

But we are aware that the most

important question with our readers in regard to these lectures is, whether they are written in a manner suited to the accomplishment of the important object of their author? This question we shall endeavor to answer to their satisfaction, by presenting them with a brief outline of the subjects which are here discussed, and giving them some information with respect to the manner in which they are treated.

In the first discourse, Mr. Pond endeavours to shew that "the work of Missions is a divine institution." In the second, that "Paul was a Missionary to the heathen." In the third, he describes "the labors of Paul." In the fourth, he attempts to show the "comparative advantages and disadvantages of the primitive christians, and christians now for spreading the gospel." In the fifth, he shows that "the work of promoting the gospel is a privilege to the church." The sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth are upon the subject of prayer. The sixth, "on the power of prayer," the seventh, "on encouragements to prayer," the eighth, "on perseverance in prayer," the ninth, "on what is implied in prayer for the success of the gospel." The tenth discourse is entitled, "our indebtedness to Missions a reason for supporting them. The eleventh, "the cruelties of the heathen." The twelfth, "the advantages of attending to Missionary intelligence." The thirteenth, "the prosperity of the church essential to the success of Missions." In the fourteenth, "evil surmisings" in respect to Missions are exposed and refuted. In the fifteenth, it is shown that "the way to be rich is to be liberal." In the sixteenth, "the obligation of christians in relation to the Jews," is considered. The seventeenth is on "idolatry among christians." The eighteenth, "on the future state of the heathen" The nineteenth, "on the aggravated guilt of sinning against light." The last, "on the Millennium."

We think this is a judicious selection of subjects. It is not in our power readily to call to mind a series of subjects, the discussion of which would be better suited to answer the important objects of the author than those which are here selected. It must be obvious to our readers, that in the discussion of these, he has the fairest opportunity to urge upon christians their *obligation* to aid the work of missions. They bring within his reach the commands of God on this subject, the example of his ancient servants the Apostles, the crimes and sufferings of the heathen, and the debt of gratitude which is due for the peculiar blessings now enjoyed through the labors of missionaries.

These subjects also give the author an excellent opportunity to meet the *objections* which are made to the work of missions, especially such as these, "that the condition of the heathen would not be improved by the introduction of christianity among them." "That they can be saved without the gospel;" "that the expense of missions is too great to be borne by the christian community;" that it is uncertain to what object the funds contributed for missionary purposes are appropriated;" and "that God will accomplish his own work in his own time."

From these subjects too, it is easy to be seen, would naturally be drawn some of the most important *encouragements* to engagedness and perseverance in the work of missions. Such for instance, as the success which has attended this work in the hands of Paul and his brethren, the privilege of being co-workers with God, the prospect of saving some of our race from present and future misery, and the blessedness of being found faithful in the service of God.

Upon these subjects, especially upon those of them which relate to prayer, every thing may be said which is necessary to enlighten christians in regard to the nature of this duty; to quicken and animate them in the performance of it, and to show them its intimate connection with numerous other important duties which they are prone to neglect.

But it will be expected that we say something respecting the manner in which these pertinent and very important subjects are discussed. And we have no hesitation in saying, in general terms, that they are discussed in a manner which does great credit to the author's intellect and heart; and which cannot, we think, but do an important service to the cause which they were intended to promote.

To the *truth*, as well as to the importance of most of the sentiments advanced in these lectures, we readily give our assent. There is, however, in our opinion, room in one or two instances, to question the correctness of the author's views, or at least, the language in which they are expressed. In his first lecture, he attempts to show that "the work of missions is a divine institution," in distinction from the pastoral office. Now, although we cannot dispute that the work of missions is "an external service enjoined in the scripture; a service which could not have been so clearly discovered, if indeed it could have been discovered at all, had it not been thus enjoined;" yet we do question the propriety of speaking of it as a distinct institution from the pastoral work. The *ministry* is a divine institution, which includes both the pastoral work and the work of missions. The work of missions is one part of the ministerial office, and the pastoral work another.—We should make the same objection to the calling of the pastoral work a divine institution, in distinction from the work of missions, as we do to the calling of the work of missions a divine in stitution, in distinction from the pastoral work. The reason why we do not think it proper to speak of these as distinct institutions, is, they are not sufficiently distinct in their natures. The work in both cases, is essentially the same. The missionary preaches the gospel to whom he is sent, as the pastor preaches it to those with whom he resides. The missionary administers the ordinances to believers, whether they are those whom he has been instrumental of converting, or those who were believers previously to his coming among them, in the same manner as the pastor administers the ordinances to the believers among whom he is settled, or who, by his instrumentality, are gathered into a church. In short, the difference between a missionary and a stated pastor, is circumstantial merely. A missionary may be a pastor, or a pastor a missionary, by a slight alteration in their circumstances. Indeed, the missionary is a pastor for the time being, whenever he resides with a church and administers to them the ordinances of the gospel. And the stated pastor, in the instruction of many of his flock, has frequently to do substantially the same work, which is considered the most appropriate to the character of a missionary.

But all we have here said, does not in the least weaken the force of Mr. Pond's reasoning to show that the work of missions is a *duty* which God has enjoined. Although we do not consider it a divine institution, in distinction from the pastoral office, yet we believe it to be a part of the work of the *ministry*, which is undoubtedly a divine institution. And the command of Christ, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," teaches the duty of missions as clearly as though this were an institution distinct from every other.

We have read with much pleasure the discourse entitled, "The way to be rich is to be liberal." But we cannot help thinking that this title implies too much. Lord Kaims would not entitle his work on Criticism, "*The* Elements of Criticism, but "Elements of Criticism;" because he was aware that there were important principles relative to the subject of criticism, which he had not included in his work. Now we think that Mr. Pond had at least as much reason to avoid the use of the definite article in the title of this discourse, as Lord Kaims had in the title of *his* work. It might, with as much propriety, be said that the way to be rich is to be *honest*; the way to be rich is to be *industrious*; or the way to be rich is "to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," as that "the way to be rich is to be liberal." The plain truth upon this subject appears to be this: true liberality is *one* of those virtues, to which God has promised a temporal reward, and consequently mankind, so far from fearing that they shall impoverish themselves by giving away their property when duty requires the sacrifice, may expect that this will be a means of increasing it. We will not say there are no *more* promises that liberality shall be rewarded, than there are that such virtues as industry, honesty, and the sanctification of the Sabbath, shall be; but we *do* say that temporal blessings are as *really* promised to these virtues as to liberality. Mr. Pond perhaps considered himself justified in saying "*the* way to be rich is to be liberal," because he was careful to show that liberality *implies* these other virtues. It is, however, a question with us, whether upon the same principle on which he has made liberality imply those other virtues, he might not make some one or all of these imply liberality. He seems to suppose, that a truly liberal man will be industrious, and honest, and frugal, and temperate, and prayerful, because he is a truly *virtuous* or *good* man. The truth of this inference we cannot deny. But, we deem it of importance to say, that it might with equal propriety be inferred, that a truly *honest* man would for the same reason be *liberal.* We cannot, therefore, see any thing in the *manner*, in which the author has discussed the subject under consideration, more than in the subject itself, to justify the title which he has given it. Had the title been *Wealth increased by Liberality*, or *Liberality a means of increasing Wealth*, instead of "The way to be rich is to be liberal," we think the impression upon his readers would have been more happy, and the truths suggested in this excellent discourse more likely to produce the effect desired. We cannot suppose that Mr. Pond, by the language, which he has used on this subject, really intended any thing more, than that true liberality is a means of increasing wealth. His arguments certainly prove no more than this. This appears to us to be the truth which his text most obviously suggests, and which, notwithstanding the error of expression which we have noticed, he has ably and strikingly illustrated. This is a truth which demands the serious attention and practical regard of all his readers; and from which we hope their attention will not be diverted by any criticisms of ours. We should regret having made the preceding remarks upon the title of this discourse, if they should excite the prejudice of any of our readers against the discourse itself, or prevent their perusing it with the same attention and self-application, as though nothing had been said respecting it.

We cannot, without increasing this review to the bulk of the volume before us, give our readers an *example* of the manner, in which all these subjects are discussed. They shall, however, be gratified with a few specimens.—

We here present them with a practical reflection upon the view which he had taken of the labors of Paul. We make this selection, not only for purpose of letting our readers see how the author writes, but with a view to inculcate a practical lesson which we think worthy of the attention and remembrance of all.

"We may learn what that is which each of us *most needs*, in order to our becoming extensively useful. It is not, in ordinary cases more health, or more strength, or greater natural faculties for doing good. It is rather this, a heart to do good. We need the spirit and the heart of Paul. We need his disinterestedness, his diligence, his prudence, his faithfulness.—We need his unconquerable ardor, his burning zeal, his humble dependance, and untiring perseverance in the cause and service of his Lord. Did these several traits belong to us, to the degree in which they belonged to him; we should not need our natural capacities enlarged, or our stations in life materially altered, in order to our becoming extensively useful.—With *hearts* to do good, either to the bodies or the souls of men, with strong *desires* to be useful, in promoting and extending the Redeemer's kingdom; opportunities for gratifying these desires would not long be wanting. And with the promised blessing of heaven on our side, we might expect every labor of benevolence, in which we engaged, would be followed, and crowned with desirable success."

The following observations upon the subject of prayer for the universal spread of the gospel, although they fully evince the hypocrisy of many a religious professor, must be considered as both just and important.

"It is implied in fervent prayer for the universal spread of the religion of Christ, that we are disposed to do all we can, by our influence, our personal labors, and our property to promote this religion. Prayer is an expression of our desires, and fervent prayer of our earnest desires that this holy religion might be promoted and fill the earth. But if we earnestly desire such an event, shall we not, be willing to *do* what in us lies to accomplish it? And if we manifest an unwillingness to do as much as this, who will give us credit for the earnestness or the sincerity of our desires? Who will believe that our prayers on the subject are not heartless and insincere? Will not the sick person, who prays for the restoration of health, be disposed to use all necessary means that his health may be restored? Will not the pious parent, who prays for the conversion of his children, be disposed to do whatever he is able, that they may be converted and saved? And will it not hold universally true, that any object, for which we can sincerely and earnestly pray, we shall be disposed and engaged, so far as in us lies, to accomplish? How plainly, therefore, is it implied in prayer for the universal diffusion of the gospel which we all believe ourselves under obligations to offer, that we also consider ourselves engaged and pledged to *do* whatever we consistently can, by our influence with others, and by our personal labours and sacrifices to spread the gospel of salvation throughout the earth."

We should be glad to present before our readers the whole of the discourse entitled, "Our indebtedness to missions a reason for supporting them." But, in this place, we can make only one short extract. After having shown, from various authentic histories, that "the inhabitants of Britain and the adjacent countries, from whom we claim to be descended, were once a cruel and ferocious race of Pagans"—"who were in the frequent, if not constant practice of offering human sacrifices," he asks,

"Do we shudder, my brethren and friends, in view of the abominations and cruelties which have been here described? Let us bear in mind then who were their authors, and to whom they belonged. It was not to a stranger, but to our *natural ancestors—the fathers and mothers* from whom we are lineally descended. Yes, my friends, in tracing back our genealogy but a few centuries, we arrive at the very scenes which have been described, and may behold our progenitors partakers in them! We may behold our own father lifting the bloody knife, and plunging it into the heart of his victims; or sinking perhaps himself beneath the stroke of a Druidical priest! We may behold him kindling a fire which is to consume a trembling prisoner to ashes; or himself confined in the "wicker cage," involved in smoke, and flames, and death!! Who, my brethren, extinguished these awful fires? What angel of mercy cut down these unhallowed groves, overturned the bloody altar, and put an end to these horrid, superstitious rites? What rescued our fathers, and through them saved us, from terrors and woes such as have been described? It was, my brethren, the *Bible*, the *Gospel*. It was the benign and saving influence of the christian religion."

There is considerable variety in the *style* of our author. Its general characteristic is plainness. It is never dry—frequently neat, and sometimes elegant. But whether it comprises more or less of ornament, it is always concise and perspicuous. There is, as is generally the case, where there is so much conciseness united with perspicuity, a good degree of *energy* in the author's style. But there is not a more prominent and striking trait in the composition of his Concert Lectures, than an easy introduction of pertinent texts of scripture. He is not indeed very copious in his quotations; but the texts which he does select, as well as the allusions which he makes to others, are for the most part, singularly appropriate. The reader may see the truth of these remarks illustrated in the following passage, in which he attempts to prove, that Paul frequently received charitable aid from individuals and churches in his day, in a manner similar to that in which missionaries abroad now receive a support from individuals and churches at home.

"The house of Onesiphorus sought him out very diligently," while he was a prisoner at Rome, "and *oft refreshed him*, and were not ashamed of his chain." In "many things also *they ministered unto him*," during his abode at Ephesus. While he was laboring at Corinth, he received contributions from other churches for his support. "I robbed other churches," he says to the Corinthians, "*taking of them wages* to do you service. These were probably the churches of Macedonia; for he immediately adds, "That which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied." The brethren at Philippi were very liberal, in contributing to the support of the great missionary Paul; and in his Epistle to them he commends them for it. "Ye have done well, that ye did communicate with mine afflictions; for even in Thessalonica, ye sent once and again unto my necessity. But I have all and abound, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent unto me."

We do not think it too much to say, that there are passages in these lectures, which are specimens of genuine eloquence. Be this as it may, there are those which, we presume, were never heard without effect, and which will never be read without pleasure. Such, we think, is the following paragraph introduced for the purpose of enforcing one of the duties which devolve on us in consequence of what was done for our heathen ancestors.

"It becomes us to adore the sovereign grace of God, as manifested in the circumstances of *our* existence. Why was our lot cast in this favored period of the world and in this highly favored portion of it? Why were we not doomed to an age of bondage and darkness, an age of Druidical superstition and cruelty? Why were we not left to worship the oaks of our forest, or the work of our hands, and to the forlorn hope of appeasing by human sacrifices the dreaded wrath of imaginary gods? Why were we not consigned, with others who have lived before us, to a state of barbarism, without Bibles, without ordinances, destitute alike of rational enjoyments in this world, and a hope of glory beyond the grave? Are we better than our fathers? Who then hath made us to differ from them? And why are we thus highly and happily distinguished? We can solve questions like these, my brethren, only by referring them to the sovereign pleasure and sovereign grace of God. It hath *pleased* him to distinguish us from all the generations which have been before us, by loading us with greater mercies, and putting into our hands a richer price to get wisdom."

Not less beautiful or affecting is the following passage, in which the author shows from the view which he had taken of the cruel rites of our heathen ancestors that "we ought very highly to value the gospel."

"Compare Old England, or New, at the present time, with what they were previous to their being visited with the light of the gospel; and how great, how happy the change! Instead of unmeaning ceremonies, and barbarous, murderous rites; the God of heaven is worshipped in the way of his own appointment; the consolations of the gospel are felt; and its Divine Institutions are known and observed. Instead of terror and bondage in this life, despair in death, and darkness and wretchedness beyond the tomb; the pleasure of the infinite Creator is revealed and understood, and by all who truly seek him, his love and favor are enjoyed. Learning too has taken the place of ignorance; wealth of poverty; social refinement of barbarian rudeness; rational liberty of lawless domination; and, in short, all the charities and joys of christian society, of the multiform horrors of untutored heathenism. The change which has been produced is so obvious and great, that its reality cannot for a moment be questioned. But what, my friends, has done it? To what, as a leading cause may this change be traced? I hazard nothing in asserting that it is the *Gospel*."

Although the author frequently expresses himself, with the propriety and elegance which appear in these quotations; yet there are instances in which, for the want of due attention we presume, he uses language that is in some respects faulty. As we doubt not this review will meet his eye, and as we hope and expect he will have occasion to give the public a second edition of his work, we will take the liberty here to name a few expressions which we think might be advantageously altered.

On the thirty-seventh page the following sentence is to be found. "We see therefore in *him*," that is Paul, "that one man may do a great deal of good." There is nothing in this sentence obscure, incorrect, or ungrammatical. But ending as it does with the too colloquial phrase, "a great deal of good," it appears extremely diminitive. As it closes a paragraph, it ought, if possible, to exceed the preceding sentences in strength and elevation; whereas, in each of these respects, it falls far below them all.

In the following sentence found

upon the sixty-fourth page, we think that the adverb *vainly* is superfluous. "If the work of spreading the gospel is a privilege to christians, then none can vainly excuse themselves from it without doing themselves an injury." All the qualification, which the verb excuse here needs, would be readily understood by his readers without a qualifying term. But if a qualifying term *is* necessary, vainly does not appear to us the most suitable. The repetition of the pronoun *themselves*, in the latter clause of this sentence, is also unnecessary. *Without injury* would be not only more concise than "without doing themselves an injury;" but equally perspicuous and much more elegant.

We notice that Mr. Pond says "*influences* of the Holy Spirit," instead of *influence* of the Holy Spirit. The plural, instead of the singular, is used three times upon page seventy-seventh. Now altho' we would not undertake to prove that there is any thing unscriptural, or metaphysically incorrect, in this phraseology; yet we hesitate not to say that the use of the singular, instead of the plural, in all those places in which the word occurs in these Lectures, would be, not only more agreeabe to good taste, but to the *general* usage of the best writers.

There are, in the work before us, instances in which the adverb is misplaced. It is so in the following sentence on page eighty-first. "He is a better Father infinitely, than any created being could be." The adverb infinitely ought to be placed immediately before the word better which it was designed to qualify, and the sentence to read thus: "He is an infinitely better Father, than any created being could be." Now we are upon this sentence, we will also take the liberty to observe, that we can see no reason why the author should say at the close of it, "*could* be," instead of *can* be, when it is obvious that he speaks in the present tense.

On page eighty-seventh, the word *awfully* appears to be improperly used. "And notwithstanding all this, prayer is greatly, *awfully* neglected." We do not think that this word, in its proper signification, expresses the real meaning of our author. He certainly did not mean to say, that prayer is *reverentially* neglected. We are not ignorant of the fact that this word is frequently used in the sense, in which our author appears to use it here; but we are confident that this use of it is not authorised either by its primitive signification, or by the *general* practice of good writers. We regret the improper use of this word the more, as it is found in a paragraph which, in other respects, is written with singular elegance and beauty.

On page 192, speaking of covetousness, as it is viewed by God. Mr. Pond says, "It is dreadfully evil in his sight." Now we suspect that many of his readers will hesitate before they admit that any thing can, properly speaking, be *dreadful* in the sight of God.. As a question of this sort may arise in their minds, and as there is nothing peculiarly pleasant in the sound of the word dreadfully, we think that another word, to which there can be no objection of the kind above suggested, might have been advantageously substituted in its place.

"Sanctuary enjoyments," and "mountains of sins," although they are expressions which may be tolerable, in conversation and in extempore prayers, are too trite to find a place in the language of such a writer as Mr. P. especially in discourses which are prepared for the public generally, and expected to have an extensive circulation.

We shall make but one verbal criticism more, and that shall be merely the suggestion of a query. At the close of one of the most eloquent and moving passages in his whole book, in which, to illustrate the cruelty of heathen warfare, he brings to view the sufferings of the Grecian Patriarch, the sack of Scio, and the massacre at Cyprus, he says "these events and many others of a similar character will descend on the page of history, down the annals of time, and remain an eternal monument of the cruelty, the sacrilege, and the shame of those who have promoted them." Our query is, whether it is proper to speak of *events* being *promoted.*

We have a few *general* remarks to make upon the Lectures before us. The author's subjects are uniformly drawn without effort from his text, and his plan of discourse is generally well suited to the accomplishment of the object which he has in view. He does not appear to discuss every subject in one uniform manner, but in a manner evidently suggested by the nature of his subject, and suited to the occasion and purpose of his discourse. There is a good degree of *originality* in these discourses, both as it respects the subjects selected, the plan of discussion, and the matter exhibited in their illustration. To a large class of readers, their contents will be in a variety of respects a *novelty.* And if they present no *new* truths to the more *intelligent* class of readers, they cannot fail to *interest* them, by the lucid and striking manner in which those with which they are already acquainted are illustrated, and the important bearing which they are shewn to have upon christian practice.—The discourse on the Millennium, and several others we intended to notice particularly; but the length to which we have already extended this review requires us to forbear. A distinguishing excellence in these discourses, is their *conciseness.* There are twenty, all upon interesting and important subjects which are clearly illustrated and faithfully applied, brought within the compass of two hundred and sixty duodecimo pages. In this respect the author has displayed not only a talent at writing somewhat rare and peculiarly valuable, but a sound judgment in adapting means to an end, as his discourses will on this account be read by many who would otherwise neglect them. These discourses appear to be the production of a mind, not only active and vigorous, but rightly imbued with truth, and deeply impressed with a sense of its importance. They manifest throughout the lively interest of their author in the cause of missions, and his earnest desire to exert all his influence in its promotion. We have read them with great pleasure, and we hope not without profit. The more we have perused them, the more valuable in our view, they have appeared. An attentive perusal of them cannot, we think, but enlighten the minds and warm the hearts of christians, in regard to one of the most important objects of their religious concern. We should be gratified to learn, that they are in the hands of all our readers.

ON FRETTING.

The etymology of the word *fret* is doubtful. It is used in various senses. It is sometimes used to denote a frith, or strait of the sea; where the waters, being confined, are rendered rough, and where in pressing their way through, they rub, or fret, against the shores, and wear away the land. Any solid substance when worn away, chafed or rendered rough, is said to be fretted. Two sticks rubbed together, will fret, or produce fire. Liquors, when put into a state of fermentation, are said to be fretted. In extreme cases, the leprosy rendering the body very rough, or raising upon it protuberances, was called a fretted leprosy.

Used in a figurative, or moral sense, and applied to the mind, this word represents agitation, uneasiness, commotion of the temper; vexation of spirit; peevishness.

Fretfulness is not, properly speaking, anger; but rather a preparation of the mind for that passion. Anger is generally produced by a cause either really or imaginary great or important; fretfulness, by a cause small, or comparitively insignificant. The bite of an insect—even the buzzing of a fly will often make a man fret; while it will require a blow or the force of a hard word, to make him angry. Throw obstacles in a man's path, and you fret him: effectually stop him, and you excite his anger and provoke his resentment.

Having thus explained the word *fret*, it may be useful briefly to show,

I. The moral nature of this temper, its effects on the subjects of it and on others, and the duty and means of avoiding it.

The *moral nature* of fretting is

sinful. This is evident from the word of God. Fretfulness, is there expressly condemned and forbidden, particularly, in the Psalms and Proverbs.

Fretting is sinful, because it is the opposite of that patience and submission, which the precepts of the Gospel require. It proceeds from ill nature, or wrong feelings towards the objects which excite it. It implies feelings, which ought not to be exercised towards any object; especially, towards our fellow creatures. But it is above all sinful, as it is always either indirectly or directly exercised towards God. It is even exercised towards the providences of God; and sometimes, even, in view of his agency in those providences. Thus Hannah fretted against the Lord, because she was not the mother of children. The Israelites fretted, or murmured, against the Lord all the way through the wilderness. Men often fret against the weather, and the various disappointments, to which they are subjected. They often fret, because they are sick and suffer pain.

But, the sinfulness of this disposition will be further seen in the *effects* of it; both on *those*, who exercise it, and on *others*.

The effects of fretting, on *those* who exercise it are most undesirable. It destroys all their peace and renders them unhappy. It disqualifies them for social intercourse with their nearest friends, and also for communion with their Maker. While in a fretful state of mind, they are unprepared to converse with others, to read their Bibles, or to pray. Shut out from communion with God and with their fellow creatures, men must be truly unhappy. In such forlorn solitude is every one, while fretting.

Fretting disqualifies men for pursuing any business with pleasure. It actually retards their progress; often prevents their success, or wholly defeats their purposes. It prevents the exercise of judgment and discretion. A man, in a fretful state of mind, is qualified, neither to prevent nor remove difficulties. A fretful man may form a string into a snarl; but he is the last man, who may expect to unravel it.

Besides, fretfulness not unfrequently issues in anger; or leads men to say or do that, which is very improper, and sometimes, very sinful. Hence the Psalmist says; "Fret not thyself, in any wise, to do evil."

The effects of fretting on *others* are no less undesirable. While a man is under the influence of this temper, he is a most uncomfortable companion. His company affords no pleasure to those, who have intercourse with him. It occasions nothing but pain. Sometimes they become impatient with him, and, before they are aware of it, fret themselves: and exhibit the same temper, which they have just viewed so unpleasant in him. Thus, by fretting ourselves we often occasion others to fret. Hateful as this leprosy of the mind is, it often spreads from individual to individual, and even from family to family.

Most of all is this disposition unhappy in its consequences, when indulged by husbands and wives. Where one bosom friend is given to fretting, and daily exercises it, however patient the other companion may be, they are both alike unhappy. I say *alike unhappy* ; for it is difficult to compare these two evils, aside from their moral *nature* ; that of seeing and hearing a friend fret, and that of indulging in fretfulness ourselves. Where each companion is given to fretting, I will not say, it had been good for them had they never been born ; for they may repent and reform. But I do say, unless they soon repent and reform, it had been good for them had they never been married. Happy for such companions, if they never do any thing more than fret.—Thrice happy for society, if the *occasion* of their fretting is that of Hannah's fretting ; for, as the disposition of children is very much influenced by the examples of their parents, the children of such unhappy parents will be almost sure to possess fretful dispositions.

The duty of avoiding a fretful turn of mind, is very apparent.—It requires no argument to show, that we ought to shun every practice and avoid every disposition, which is contrary to the Scriptures ; which is offensive to God : which renders ourselves and others unhappy ; which disqualifies us to serve our Maker and to promote the good of our fellow creatures ; and which entails evils on our children. We ought carefully to guard against such an evil ; or to lay aside so easily a besitting sin. It is just as clearly our duty to avoid fretting, as to avoid profane swearing. Each practice is a sin against God ; however they may differ in turpitude. It is just as clearly our duty to avoid fretting as to be sober and temperate. But,

In what ways shall we *avoid* this Sin ? Here, some undoubtedly, have a greater work to do than others ; for some appear to be constitutionally of a fretful temper. Perhaps they have in some measure, inherited the disposition from their fretful parents. Some are more tried and exposed to temptation than others.

One way of avoiding the habit which we are considering is, to endeavour to keep in mind the impropriety, the unreasonableness and the unpleasantness of it. Let the fretful man often contemplate his looks and actions, when he frets, and try to listen to his own words. When a mirror is at hand let him, while fretting, go and look into it. If a sight of himself does not excite a smile ; it may, as it ought, provoke a blush. He cannot be pleased to see the expressive beauty of his countenance so defaced. Let him consider, every time he finds himself inclined to fret, how unfit he will be for business; and that, the more he frets, the more occasion he may find for fretting. Let him consider all the unhappy consequences of fretting, both as it respects himself and as it respects others; especially his near friends, his companion and children. Above all, let him keep in mind the sin of which he is guilty; that it is expressly and repeatedly forbidden in the word of God; that he cannot fret without sinning against his Maker.

Let him, also, remember, that he is in the presence of God.—Many people, much addicted to fretting in their families, will always abstain, while others are present; and thus in the estimation of those who visit them, they pass for persons of amiable dispositions. Let them see from this fact, that they *can* and *ought* to restrain themselves at all times;—and remember, that God is omnipresent; that he ever beholds their looks and hears their fretful words. Let them fear God rather than man, and consider, that he can no more justify them in fretting, than in swearing.

Let no one say the subject of these remarks is unimportant, or consider fretting a small evil. *Sin is no trifle.* Let those, who feel convicted, often look to God in their closets; there mourn over this depravity of their disposition, and devoutly implore forgiveness and grace to live patient and quiet lives; that they may be happy themselves, render others happy, and thus glorify their father who is in heaven, in deeds of charity, words of love and looks of kindness.

W.

A popular objection to Revivals of Religion considered and refuted.

~~ON REVIVALS OF RELIGION.~~

The more common objection to revivals of Religion, is that such seasons are not clearly distinguishable from cases of strong and prevalent excitement in ~~respect~~ regard to other things. It is admitted, that individuals are often very much excited, on the subject of religion. It is admitted also, that whole parishes and districts are not unfrequently excited, in a similar way. Religious meetings are multiplied and thronged; religion assumes a new importance, and becomes the ~~common~~ general topic of thought, of interest, and of conversation. But it is contended that such excitements are no exception ~~from~~ to the common course of ~~nature~~ events, and that there is no need of supposing the special agency of the Divine Spirit, in order to account for them. Very frequently, it is said, there are instances of great and general excitement, in regard to other things. A town-meeting, a law-suit, a parish quarrel, or some incident of the like nature, is capable of producing an excitement (on a different subject indeed) but as great, as general, and as lasting, as any of those on religious subjects, which are dignified with the name of Revivals of Religion. Why then, it is asked, shall we suppose an effusion of the *Holy Spirit*, in seasons of excitement on religious subjects, more than in similar seasons in regard to other subjects? If natural causes are sufficient to account for existing appearances in the one case, why not in the other?

It will be the object of this paper to shew, by a recurrence to *facts* connected with revivals of religion, that this objection to them is unfounded—that they are widely and gloriously distinguished from all other cases of strong excitement—and that there is no way of accounting for them, ~~even~~ on philosophical principles, but by supposing the special interposition and agency of God. What I am about to say may not apply indeed to all the seasons, which have been denominated "revivals of religion." There have undoubtedly been *false* and *spurious* revivals—scenes of tumult and confusion, in which it would be degrading the Holy Spirit to suppose he had any direct concern. I shall speak of such revivals only, as I suppose to be genuine, and as are commonly to reputed, ~~as~~ by orthodox ministers and Christians, at the present day. And,

1. Such revivals are distinguished from all other cases of prevalent excitement, in respect to their *origin.*—It is true, indeed, that the minds of people are not unfrequently excited and inflamed, and very generally so, on other subjects besides religion. It is true, that these excitements are to be attributed to natural causes. And it is farther true, that we can in all cases ascertain the causes, to which they are to be attributed. There is no mistaking on this point; for the circumstance or event which has caused and continues the excitement, will itself be the topic of general conversation. But in respect to most revivals of religion, no sufficient natural cause for their occurrence can be assigned. The gospel to be sure has been preached, and the means of grace have been in operation as usual, but no event of special interest has occurred, and no reason can be given why they should take place when they actually do, rather than at any other time. From some invisible and unknown cause, the minds of people often are simultaneously impressed with religious considerations. Christians feel deeply humbled and engaged, and are led to pray frequently and fervently for the prosperity of Zion; while sinners begin to be solemn and anxious, and to manifest an unusual concern for their souls. Instead of any extraordinary means being used at such times, to bring about this state of feeling; the feelings of people in most instances impel them to a more diligent use of means, and to open their minds one to another, on the great subject which impresses them. It is from the fulness of their laboring hearts, that they *begin* to speak. I do not say that this is the invariable method, in which revivals of religion commence; but every day's observation testifies, that it is the frequent, if not the common method. So far are they from being dependent, for their origin, upon some great and striking, external event, such as the prevalence of disease, or an instance of mortality, that the occurrence of such an event, ~~even~~ although a serious one, has in many instances served to interrupt their progress.

We see then, that revivals of religion differ ~~are different~~ from all other cases of prevalent excitement, in ~~respect to~~ their *origin*; and that in accounting for their commencement, we are necessarily led to suppose the interposition and agency of an Almighty Spirit.

2. They are distinguished from other cases of general excitement, by the nature and *depth* of those feelings, which are brought ~~they bring~~ into exercise. In cases where the existing cause is an external one, the feelings excited are necessarily superficial. They are flighty, boisterous, and it may be powerful; but they have no settled and uniform character, and do not spring from the deep recesses ~~depth~~ of the soul. But not so the feelings which are brought into exercise, in a genuine revival of religion. Whether holy or unholy, these are always of a deep and solemn kind, such as nothing merely external could produce. The most deeply hidden parts of the soul are af-

fected, and the cause is felt to be the naked influence of Him, who alone trieth ~~searcheth~~ the reins and the heart.—The distressed *sinner* feels a load upon his conscience, which he cannot ~~throw off~~ remove, and can scarcely sustain. Wherever he goes, his burthen follows him; and whatever means he employs to remove it, still it remains. While the rejoicing *Christian* feels an elevation of spirit, which the world could not give, and cannot take away. Whether the feelings which are exercised in a revival of religion are right or wrong, they commonly agree in this—they do not float on the surface of the soul, the sport of conflicting circumstances and events; but have their origin and seat in the deep places of the heart. They spring from ~~the~~ that region of the inner man, over which the external world has little direct power, and which can be touched efficiently only by the finger of God.—They are excited by the influence of an Almighty Spirit, and lost only when this influence is grieved away.

3. Revivals of religion are distinguished from other cases of strong and prevalent excitement, in *this* respect—the views and feelings produced by them are reasonable in themselves, and they lead ~~[illegible]~~ to a reasonable course of conversation and pursuit.—In seasons of great excitement on other subjects ~~besides religion~~, the feelings of people ~~often~~ frequently become ~~very~~ unreasonable. They are aroused and inflamed beyond all proper bounds. They fall little short, often of a species of insanity. And as the feelings of persons at such times are unreasonable in themselves, so they lead them to speak and to act unreasonably. They lead them to say and to do many things, ~~when~~ which in their sober moments they regret, and of which they are ashamed. But totally different from this are the views and feelings which are entertained in a revival of religion. Though strongly excited, these are perfectly *reasonable in themselves.* They are such as comport with the truth and with the actual state of things. Persons at such times, view religion to be all important; and it is so. It engages their attention, and interests their feeling; and it is right it should. They regard themselves as great sinners; and they really are such. They are distressed too and in bitterness on account of their sins; and they have reason to be. The inquiry, which their hearts most frequently suggest, is, "What shall we do to inherit eternal life?" and what more important inquiry could their hearts suggest? Frequently they are seen acquiescing sweetly in the will of God, and rejoicing in him as their friend and portion; and this certainly is their duty. They find all parts of his instituted service pleasant, and engage in it with interest, with fervor, and delight; and with what better feelings could they engage in it? The subjects of a genuine religious revival are conscious that their feelings, while under its influence, are reasonable and proper; and instead of condemning themselves, that they have now such feelings, they feel ~~humble and condemn themselves~~ condemned that they have not always had the same.

And as the views and feelings of persons, at such times, are reasonable in themselves, so they prompt them to a perfectly ~~reasonable~~ rational course of *conversation* and *pursuit*. They prompt them to speak often one to another, and freely to converse on the great subject of religion; and on what more suitable or profitable subject could they converse? They also prompt them to be much in prayer, both in secret and in public; and in this respect, obviously, they are no more than imitating and obeying their glorified Savior. Their feelings, moreover, prompt them to live, as though time was short, and eternity long—as though the body was a trifle, and the soul ~~inestimable~~ infinitely valuable—as though the world was fleeting and empty, and the religion of Jesus ~~was all in all~~ of the utmost importance; and how could they pass away their lives in a manner more truly ~~reasonable or laudable!~~ commendable or rational?

When persons look back upon their feelings and conduct, in seasons of high and strong excitement on other subjects besides that of religion, they commonly think of them with pain and regret; and it is their sincere desire that they may never ~~be left to~~ feel so again. But do those, who have passed through a genuine revival of religion, and been themselves the happy subjects of it ~~do they~~ ever look back with sorrow and pain upon the course of conversation and conduct which they then pursued? Do they ever afterwards regret their feelings at such a time; or desire, or pray that they may feel so no more? On the contrary, do they not, in all subsequent life, remember their feelings and conduct during the revival with great satisfaction? Do they not consider the loss of such feelings ~~as~~ a heavy loss; and the declining from such a course of conversation and practice ~~as~~ a most unreasonable declension? And is it not their desire and prayer that they may be revived again, and again experience the blessedness they enjoyed in the day of their espousals? This shews, that the feelings of persons, in a season of revival, will bear *looking at*, when the excitement is past—that they are ~~highly~~ truly reasonable in themselves—and that they prompt to a ~~most~~ reasonable and proper course of conversation and ~~conduct~~ pursuit. In this respect, therefore, which is a cardinal one, revivals of religion are widely distinguished from all other cases of strong and prevalent excitement.

4. They are also distinguished from other cases of this kind, by the sudden and surprizing *changes* which often take place in the feelings of persons, ~~and~~ especially of *opposers*, in respect to them. In seasons of excitement on other subjects, there are usually ~~different~~ parties; and party lines, when once drawn, in most instances remained unaltered. Or if there are changes in ~~respect to~~ a few individuals, these changes are brought about gradually, and are easily assignable to natural causes.—But in revivals of religion, the case is often ~~very~~ different. Here indeed there are commonly parties—there are opposers of the work—there are those who do every thing in their power to ~~put a~~ stop ~~to~~ it, and bring it into discredit and comtempt. And it not unfrequently happens, that these very persons are arrested in the height and violence of their opposition, and in the course of a few days, or hours, their feelings undergo a total change. Instead of opposing the work, they become entirely favorable to it, and deeply interested and warmly engaged for its continuance and support. They are made to feel that it is a reality, and begin, with others, to weep and to beg for mercy. Their pride is humbled; ~~and~~ their enmity slain, their hard hearts are broken at a stroke; and their reproachful lips begin to speak forth the praises of the living God. Thus it was with Saul of Tarsus; and thus it has been with hundreds and thousands since. God manifests in this way that the work is his own, and that there is no ~~such thing as effectually~~ stopping or interrupting it, in opposition to his pleasure and power.

5. It may be added, that revivals of religion are distinguished from all other cases of prevalent excitement, by the *permenancy* of those impressions which they leave on the mind, and the *unalterable* change which they produce in the character. Other cases of excitement do not leave such impressions, or produce such a change. Events may

occur, in Providence, which rouse up the minds of people to a strong and general excitement. Something may take place, for instance, which calls forth a general burst of *indignation*. But, in this case, persons do not remain indignant forever. The storm passes over, and all is again calm. Or something may take place, which excites an universal feeling of *joy*. But, in this case, the tide of joy quickly ebbs, and things revert to their former state. Or something may take place, which becomes the common topic of interest and of conversation. But neither respecting this, whatever it may be, do persons think or talk forever. It soon grows stale, is dropped, and forgotten. And in none of these cases of excitement, are the characters of the persons affected essentially altered. If they were saints before, they are saints afterwards; and if they were sinners before, they are sinners still. But in a genuine revival of religion, persons receive impressions which they never lose. A change is produced in their characters which is radical and permanent ~~eternal~~. They are suddenly arrested in their career of vice, of vanity, or of worldly pursuit; their thoughts are turned almost wholly to new subjects; their feelings receive a new direction; a new aspect is given to their whole characters; and this is perpetual. It exists, not for a day, a week, a month, or a year; but in every case of genuine religious excitement, *it is perpetual.* The person affected becomes, in the strong language of scripture, "a *new creature.*" "Old things have passed away with him, and all things have become new." He contemplates almost every object around him, with new eyes. He has new thoughts, new feelings, new motives, connexions, and attachments, new hopes and fears, sorrows and joys. What he once hated, he now loves; and what he once loved, and delighted in, he now detests. And this new character, which ~~he~~ assumed he never loses. It continues, it may be with some interruptions, but on the whole with increasing evidence, till he dies; and then, as we doubt not, it continues forever. Here then we have a decisive characteristic of religious revivals, and one by which they are widely and gloriously distinguished from all other cases of excitement whatever. They leave *permanent* impressions on the mind, and produce a great, and happy, and ent- ~~ex-~~ ial ~~tensive~~ change in the character. It is this, especially, which stamps revivals of religion, as the work of God.

In view of the remarks here made, ~~submit-~~ ~~ted to the~~ our readers ~~of this paper~~ will know how to estimate the opinions of those, who ~~would~~ place revivals of religion in the same class with cases of strong and prevalent excitement on other subjects. They will be satisfied, we ~~I~~ think, that they cannot thus be classed, nor can they be accounted for in the same way. They are attended by ~~several~~ Catholic ~~manifest~~ and important traits, which render them as distinct from most other cases of prevalent excitement, as wisdom is from folly, or religion from sin; which indeed elevate them as far above these other excitements, as the heavens are above the earth. Such are the appearances which accompany them, that they can in no way be accounted for, but by attributing them to the special power of God—~~to~~ the special influence and agency of the Holy Spirit. these ~~These~~ are the best reasons, therefore, why all Christians should desire them, and rejoice in them—why they should pray for them, and labor to promote them—and why they should think and speak of the frequent revivals, which are distinguishing and blessing the present age, with the liveliest gratitude, and ~~the sincerest~~ praise.

To the Editors of the Utica Repository.

REMEDY FOR "A SERIOUS EVIL."

Gentlemen :

Through the medium of the Boston Recorder, I have seen some statements respecting "a serious evil" in the Presbyterian Church. Whether the evil is confined to that church is not the question.—That it exists there, I do not doubt. That a remedy is needful will be admitted. Whether I can point out a remedy, or apply it, in any measure, I do not certainly know; but I will do the best I can. Permit me, however, to say, that, being myself comfortably settled, not waiting for the death of Dr. ——, or the removal of Mr. ——, I have no personal interest, or concern, in the business. All I wish is to see ministers as useful as they can be, and congregations freely and ably supplied. As a remedy for the evil I would say,

1. *Let every minister or licentiate be constantly employed.* To this all agree. But how can it be effected? It is the easiest thing in the world. Never go to a place without being invited.—But what if I am invited to none? Then take your axe, or your flail; as fully satisfied that you have mistaken your calling. For if you are truly called by your master to preach the gospel, he will find a place for you, without your transgressing a single rule of decorum. Go to the first place you are invited to, and continue in that place doing all you can for Christ, for the church, and for the souls of men, till you are fully satisfied it is your duty to go to another place. But at any rate, be always employed, whether you receive any compensation or not. For just as certainly as you are called to preach the gospel, you may find a place to preach it, and support while you are preaching it.

2. *Let feeble congregations be aided by such as are able.* I do not believe, gentlemen, that the evil, of which "Observer" very justly complains, is altogether with ministers. I believe that our Presbyteries and able congregations must bear a part. It was an ancient rule, that "the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak;" and Paul says to the Corinthians, "I would not that other men be eased, and you burdened, but that there should be equality." As a minister should be willing to preach the gospel to the poor, to ride in the woods, to settle any where, and do all the good he can; so should his brethren in the cities, and villages, and able congregations, sympathize with him; put out something of their abundance to aid and encourage him, and also excite the rich and the liberal, and the pious members of their congregations, to aid the patient and laborious minister among the poor. This is the genuine spirit of domestic missions. I see no reason, gentlemen, why my brother should go and spend all his time and talents and strength among the poor rather than myself, unless it be this, that he is better qualified for that work, and I for another. This is a good reason.—If it be so, I see no reason why he should bear the burden alone, when I am able to help him. Is there any? Should love to Christ and to the church, and to the souls of men, move him to this service? Why should not the same love move me? Should he be willing to preach the gospel to the poor, because of this love shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost? Why should not a hundred christians, who are able, be made acquainted with his love and zeal, and aid him too? Where is the principle of reason, or of equity;

of equality, or of law; of the gospel, or implied in the example of Paul, or even of Christ, which ought to influence such a minister and not myself, and every other man in the community? Is it right, gentlemen, "that other men be eased and you burdened?"--Would "Observer" himself think, that a minister who has a family, or who intends to have, ought to sacrifice, out of his own earnings, One Hundred Dollars every year, and live as he can, and do as much work of the ministry as he can, while One Hundred members of able churches are exempted from the payment of one dollar each, though each of them could pay One Hundred with as much ease as the minister? Is it the spirit of the gospel, which can look on and see others labor, and make sacrifices, and deny themselves, and suffer for Christ and for souls, while we can do and suffer nothing? It is a very fine subject for charitable talk to many ministers and professors—they can tell how much the missionary should be willing to suffer in this glorious cause, and blame him, if he whisper his complaints--but can there be an instance of greater self-ignorance? Do these ministers and professors remember that they are bought with the blood of Christ, or have they forgotten their obligations, and do they think themselves at liberty to labor for themselves and their families only, while their brethren must take u the common cross of christians, and bear the whole weight of it without a groan or a sigh, and without so much as casting a look for aid to the habitations of such as dwell at ease?

I find, Messrs. Editors, that my indignation against such inconsideration, (I had almost said, hypocrisy,) begins to rise, and I leave the subject at your disposal

Yours,

EQUALITY.

ANECDOTE.

THE FOLLOWING ANECDOTE IS RELATED OF THE FAMOUS DR. MANTON.

"Being appointed to preach before the Lord Mayor, the court of aldermen and the companies of the city, the Doctor chose a subject, in which he had an opportunity of displaying his judgment and learning. He was heard with admiration and applause by the more intelligent part of the audience. But as he was returning with the Lord Mayor, a poor man followed him, pulled him by the sleeve of his gown, and asked him if he were the gentleman that preached before the Lord Mayor. He answered, he was. "Sir," says he, "I came with hopes of getting some good to my soul, but I was greatly disappointed, for I could not understand a great deal of what you said; you were quite above me." The Doctor replied with tears; "Friend, if I did not give you a sermon, you have given me one; and by the grace of God I will never play the fool to preach before my Lord Mayor in such a manner again."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A "Review" from an anonymous Writer merits attention. W. must be deferred for want of room.

F. C. F. Tennet, and Antipes have been received.

THE

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THE SEALING INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED TO BELIEVERS.

A seal of an individual upon any decree or other writing, denotes that the writing is his, and that his veracity is pledged that the declaration, contract or order, which it contains shall be fulfilled. When Jezebel wrote letters to the Elders of Israel to procure the death of Naboth, she sealed them with the king Ahab's seal. This seal made them the letters of the king, and secured his authority in the execution of the orders which they contained. That which rendered the decree of Ahasuerus against the Jews irreversible, was the circumstance that it was sealed with the king's seal. A civil contract which is sealed by the parties is mutually binding. The seal is the token of its being their act, and of their engagement to fulfil it. The influence of the Holy Spirit is often, in the writings of the apostles, spoken of under the similitude of a seal. Referring to Christ, Paul thus addresses the Ephesians. "In whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. The circumstance that the Ephesians are here said to be sealed after they believed, shews that by the sealing influence of the Spirit is not meant its restraining, awakening, or convincing influence which is common, in a greater or less degree, to all who are acquainted with the gospel; but that influence of the Spirit which is peculiar to saints, and which is promised to them as such, and which is usually called its *sanctifying* influence. It is probably called a seal, because it stamps the moral image of God upon saints, and shows them to be his, as clearly as a seal, with the image of the king upon it, shows the decree or other writing to which it is affixed, to be his. It is also like a seal, a pledge that the work now begun shall be completed, and that all the subjects of it shall receive the blessings in reserve for characters of this description.—This is agreeable to the apostles own explanation of it. After telling the believers at Ephesus, that "they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," he subjoins in the very next words, "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Agreeably to this he says to the same persons in another place, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And he says again in the fifth chapter of his second Epistle to the Corinthians, "Now he that wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the *earnest* of the Spirit."—Now the earnest of the heavenly inheritance is a *part* of it, given before hand, as a pledge of the full and final possession. This earnest is the first fruits of the Spirit, or those holy affections which shall be carried to perfection in the state of glory. Every instance of the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit is properly his *sealing influence*, because it produces that holiness in which the moral image of God consists.—Those whose affections are sanctified by the Spirit, are such as bear the moral image of God, are sealed with his seal, and set apart for himself.

This sealing influence of the Holy Spirit is given to all true believers. I say all *true* believers because there is an essential difference between believers in heart and believers in speculation merely. True believers are those who have been born again, and who trust not in their own goodness, but in the atonement of Christ as the foundation of their pardon and acceptance with God. They not only assent to the truth that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, but cordially approve of his character and of all which he has done for the redemption of men. To all of this description, the sealing influence of the Holy Spirit is promised. This is plainly implied in the following declaration of Paul to the Ephesians. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." The Spirit of promise here means the same as *promised* Spirit. The Apostle takes it for granted, that the Ephesians knew that the Holy Spirit was promised to seal all true believers to the day of redemption. God has never promised the *renewing* or *regenerating*, or *sanctifying* influence of the Holy Spirit to any impenitent, unbelieving sinners. Regeneration is always an unpromised mercy to the subjects of it God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. He is found of them that seek him not. He awakens, convinces, and converts whom he pleases as an *unpromised* mercy, or as an act of absolute sovereignty. But after men become reconciled to God, and believe in the gospel, then, he makes promises to them, all which are yea, and amen in Christ. As soon as any become cordially united to Christ, then God promises them the gracious, sanctifying, sealing influence of his Holy Spirit.—This will appear, if we consider,

1. That God has promised to

carry on his own work, which he has begun in the hearts of believers. The Apostle Paul says to the Philippians, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." And in the next chapter he mentions the ground of this confidence. "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasuse." It is by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, that God carries on the work of grace which he has begun in the hearts of the regenerate. And if he has engaged to carry on this work, then it is certain that all true believers will enjoy the sealing influence of his Spirit unto the day of redemption, God will never take his Holy Spirit from them, but continue his gracious sealing influence through life.

2. God promises to *dwell* in the hearts of believers by his Spirit. This mode of expression is very frequently used in the Scriptures to denote the continuance and permanency of the divine influence upon the hearts of saints. The Apostle quotes and applies this promise of God to true believers. "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will *dwell* in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And to the same purpose he says again to christians, "What, know ye not that your body is the *temple* of the *Holy Ghost* which is *in* you?"—And John says, "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and *God in him.*"—Now, God dwells in saints only by the gracious influence of his Spirit. This appears from those passages which speak of the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit. Paul says to the Romans, "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God dwell in you.* Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead *dwell in you*, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. This indwelling of the Spirit of Christ is often promised to believers. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, if any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the *Spirit*, which they that believe on him should receive."—Again Christ said to his friends just before he left them, I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may *abide with you forever*," even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, neither knoweth him, but ye know him; for he *dwelleth* in you, and *shall be in you.*" This indwelling of the Holy Spirit means his gracious in-

fluence, by which he seals believers, and prepares them for the kingdom of heaven.

3. It appears that God will give all true believers the sanctifying and sealing influence of his Spirit from the condition upon which he has promised this peculiar favor. He has promised it upon condition of their asking for it. Christ said to his disciples, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone; or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. It is undoubtedly in reference to this promise of the Holy Spirit, that the apostle calls him "that Holy Spirit of promise;" or that Holy Spirit which Christ promised to give to his sincere followers on a certain condition, which is the same as that upon which he promised to bestow other favors. He said to his disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." God will certainly give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, at whatever time, and in whatever measure he pleases, if they ask a right.—Christians may ask amiss for this, as well as for any other Spiritual favor. They may ask for such an influence as he never bestows upon believers merely as such.—Or they may ask for such an influence as they do not need, nor desire at the time of their asking.—Or they may ask for his influence in the faith of a promise which he has never made. He has never promised his gracious influence to them at any particular times, or under any particular circumstances when they shall pray for it. The Spirit of God exercises the same sovereignty in operating upon the hearts of believers, as he does in operating upon their understandings and consciences. It is certain however, that the Spirit of God will fulfil his promise to believers in granting them his sealing influence, according to its true and proper import.

From the promise which God has made of his Spirit to true believers, we may learn how they are *led* by it. As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. This implies that *all* the children of God are *led* by his Spirit. But *how* christians are led by the Spirit of God, is a question of great practical importance. This question, however, may be easily answered by attending to the *kind* of influence of the Spirit which is promised them.—This, as we have seen, is not his miraculous, or supernatural, but his *sanctifying* influence. As the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, christians do not need the Holy Spirit to reveal *new* truths to them. But as their remaining depravity of heart diverts their attention from truths which are already revealed, and exerts a blinding influence upon their understanding and conscience, they *do* need the Holy Spirit to take this away. If an *evil* heart leads christians into error in respect to faith and practice, then nothing but a good heart can lead them into truth and duty. Accordingly, God promises to give such a heart to his friends. "I will give them a heart to *know me*." The Apostle says in the name of christians, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might *know* the things which are freely given to us of God." A good heart loves truth and duty, and disposes christians both to know and do their duty. The Holy Spirit, therefore, leads christians, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, which gives them a spiritual discernment of spiritual things, which enables them to understand the great truths of the gospel, and which disposes them to obey every divine command with pleasure and delight. The leading of the Spirit which David desired, was that which consists in holy affections. "I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart."

From the subject before us, we may learn what is to be understood by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is true, indeed, that the scriptures speak of the Holy Spirit as being *in* Christians, as abiding in them, and as dwelling in them. These passages have given occasion to many devout practical writers to say much respecting the *indwelling* of the Spirit in all true believers. But a very large portion of these have run into unjust and unscriptural notions on this subject. Some have represented the Holy Spirit as becoming a living principle of action in the souls of saints, and superseding their own voluntary exercises. Others have been more extravagant in their ideas on this subject and supposed that the Holy Spirit has been personally united with believers, so that they have become Goded with God and Christed with Christ. These are certainly very unjust and absurd opinions of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in christians. For, if what has been said be true, the Holy Spirit no more dwells in believers, than God the Father dwells in them, or than Christ dwells in them. God is said to dwell in saints and saints in him. Christ is said to dwell in believers and believers in him. The apostle John says, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him." And Christ himself says, "If any man love me he will keep my words; and my father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." God and Christ abide or dwell in believers only by producing holy affections in their hearts, and manifesting their love to them. And according to what has been said, the Holy Spirit abides or dwells in believers precisely in the same manner. He never becomes personally united to them, nor becomes a principle of action in them, so as to act in their stead, but only exercises his sealing and guiding influence on their hearts, which keeps them in the love of God and way of duty. The Spirit of God may properly be said to abide or dwell in believers by his sealing and guiding influence, because this is not merely an occasional influence, but permanent, lasting through life.

The subject which we are now considering teaches us also what we are to understand by the witness of the Spirit. The apostle John says, " He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." This is supposed to be the witness or evidence, which the Holy Spirit gives to all true believers of their good estate.—That all true believers have the witness of the Spirit, respecting their state of grace is generally and justly admitted, by those who are called orthodox christians.—But there is a diversity of opinions among them relative to this subject. Some maintain what they call the immediate witness of the Spirit. Some suppose that he witnesses, by a still internal voice telling them, in so many words, that they are born of God. Not a few individual christians have been persuaded, that the Spirit of God has borne this infallible witness to their souls, which has given them full assurance of their salvation.—Many more have supposed, that the spirit of God has borne witness to them that they have experienced a saving change, by bringing to view and impressing on their minds particular texts of scripture; such as " Be of good cheer thy sins are forgiven thee," or other passages of a similar consoling nature. Others of a more visionary turn, have supposed that the Spirit has borne witness of their gracious state, by giving them a clear view of the *person* of Christ *smiling* upon them and expressing his love to them. These are certainly false and groundless notions of the witness of the Spirit. But we find this subject set in a true and clear light in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.—The apostle says to christians, " Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." By our spirit the apostle evidently means the spirit of adoption, or a filial spirit toward God, which is a spirit peculiar to the Sons of God or those who are born of his spirit. The spirit of God by his written word bears witness, that the spirit of adoption is the fruit of his special, gracious, sealing influence, and therefore is an infallible evidence that all who have the spirit of adoption are the sons of God and heirs of heaven. The spirit bears witness to believers, that they are the children of God, by giving them holy and filial affections toward God. So that the more grace he gives them, the more clearly he bears witness, that they are true believers and entitled to eternal life. Agreeably to this, the apostle John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. And again he says, "Hereby we *know* that he," that is God, "abideth in us" by the Spirit which he has given us.

Another important truth taught us by the subject now under consideration is, that all true believers will persevere in holiness unto eternal life. The apostle represents the sealing of the Spirit which is promised to all true believers, as inseparably connected with their final salvation. Speaking to those who had trusted in Christ he says, "In whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." The sealing influence of the Spirit, which is actually given to true believers, is the *earnest*, that is, a part of their heavenly inheritance, which renders their future possession of heaven as certain, as if they were now there. He asserts the same inseparable connection between the sealing of the Spirit and final salvation, in another place, where he says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." As soon as the Spirit of God converts sinners, and gives them faith in Christ, he exercises his sealing influence on their hearts and continues to exercise the same influence unto the day of redemption, or till they arrive in heaven. The Holy Spirit, in sealing believers, gives them the Spirit of adoption, by which they become the children of God, and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and, therefore, it is as certain that they shall persevere in holiness unto salvation, as that Christ shall be rewarded, and see his seed, and be satisfied. On this solid ground, he says to believers, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Again he says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."—The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints is abundantly confirmed by a variety of plain declarations and promises of scripture, some of which shall here be quoted. Paul says to the Romans, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.—For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified them he also glorified." After this the same apostle asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be *able* to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The apostle Peter says in his general epistle to believers, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven for you*, who are *kept by the power of God*, through faith unto salvation, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls." Such is the plain, full, unequivocal evidence which the inspired writers give us of the final perseverance and salvation of all true believers. It is their indispensable duty, therefore, to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, that they may take hold on the great and precious promises, which God has given them for their support and consolation, in their darkest hours and under their heaviest trials.

EPAPHRAS.

Messrs. Editors.

I send you the following observations in answer to an important question which I noticed in your Magazine for the month of March. The question is this: "Ought a wife to refrain from making a public profession of religion in consequence of being forbidden by her husband?"

This is a question of great practical importance. A satisfactory answer cannot but be serviceable to a large number whose trying circumstances give them a deep interest in the subject, and render it peculiarly important that they should be guided in the path of truth and duty. After much reflection upon the subject of this question, I cannot hesitate to answer it in the negative. The reason which I have to assign for this answer is the following: The husband has no *right* to forbid the wife to make a public profession of religion. It is readily granted that he is "the head of the wife" that he has and ought to have the government of his house, and that the wife and all other members of the family are under obligation to obey him in all his just and reasonable commands. This point is placed beyond dispute by the express declarations of the Apostles. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, says, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject unto their own husbands in every thing." The language of Peter on this subject is equally plain and decisive, "Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives." That these passages of scripture give the husband authority over the wife cannot be denied. But the question here is, whether this authority is *absolute*, or limited by reason and propriety. That it must be limited within the bounds of reason and propriety is what, it is believed, no considerate person can doubt. No one would pretend that the husband had a right to command the wife to destroy her children. But why not? Because this is an unreasonable command, a plain violation of the laws of humanity and an impious renunciation of the authority of God. As the husband has no right to give such a command, the wife is under no obligation to obey it, if it is given. It is a plain case, that the husband's authority over the wife does not extend to the violations of her rights, or to the violation of the rights of others, or to the violation of the divine commands. Within all these, to say the least, it must be limited. Now for him to command his wife to destroy her children, or even to injure them, is a violation of their rights, is an abridgement of her liberty, and disobedience to the authority of God. A view of this extreme case shows at once, that the authority of the husband over the wife, is and must be, limited within the bounds of reason and propriety. But is it unreasonable and improper, that he should forbid her making a public profession of religion? Certainly; for this prohibition interferes with her rights of conscience. It takes away her liberty, and deprives her of a privilege secured to her by the laws of her country and which perhaps she values more highly than any mere earthly blessing. Besides, this prohibition countermands the authority of Christ. It was the dying command of the Savior, "Do this in remembrance of me." By forbidding his wife to make a public profession of religion, the husband gives a command in opposition to the Savior's authority, which cannot be morally binding. Such a command, given without right, can impart no obligation.—The wife is no more obliged to obey such a command, than she would be to starve herself, or her children, were this required by her husband. The husband, whenever he forbids the wife to make a profession of religion, not only betrays a shameful want of condescension and kindness, but assumes an authority which has never been conferred upon him. He steps out of his proper sphere, and acts not the part of a husband, but of a tyrant.

But grant that the husband has no right to forbid the wife to make a profession of her faith, and that she is under no obligation to obey him if he does; yet would it not in most cases be advisable for her to *yield* to his command? To this it is replied, if declining to make a profession of religion were merely giving up a privilege, it might be proper in some cases to do it for the sake of peace. But it is not simply relinquishing a privilege, it is neglecting a duty—a duty which is enjoined by a higher authority than that of man.—Now whether a woman can with propriety neglect a positive command of Christ, from a regard to an unjust and abusive prohibition of man, is not a question of difficult solution. This is a mistaken policy. If the husband *enforces* his command, or by his own agency, either directly or indirectly exerted, renders it impossible for the wife to make a profession of religion, she is of course free from blame, and the whole responsibility of the neglect rests on him. But in those instances in which wives, forbidden by their husband to make a profession of religion, have it in their power to go forward, it is both duty and sound policy to do it. "They ought to obey God rather than man." And it is believed, that in ninety-nine cases in a hundred, such a measure would tend more to peace than the opposite. Firmness and decision in duty, as well as meekness and gentleness of character, are necessary to excite the respect, and overcome the feelings of opposers. Many of those inconsiderate husbands, who oppose the desire of their wives to partake of the holy supper, would be brought to their senses, if their wives should, with meekness, and with all due regard to the feelings of their husbands, *insist* upon obeying the command of their Savior. Were they to go forward, showing that they fear God rather than man, that they love Christ more than their nearest friends, and that they are determined to follow him through evil report and good report, they would generally meet with less opposition than they do by yielding to the unreasonable objections made to the performance of their duty. There is no man worthy of the respect and affections of a virtuous woman, who does not know that she has rights, and that he is bound to respect them. And it is believed, that there are very few who could have the hardihood to hold out in their opposition to the conscientious and pious desires of a wife to profess her faith in the Redeemer, were these uniformly accompanied with becoming decision and firmness, as well as gentleness and affection.—"He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely." A woman, who has evidence that she is a true friend of Christ, ought not to be deterred from making a profession of religion, by fear of giving offence to her husband. He has no *right* to be offended at this.—As it is a duty which the word of God enjoins upon her, the performance of it renders her more worthy of his affection, respect and confidence, than the neglect of it. And if he is led seriously to reflect upon the subject, he cannot but view it in this light.—And nothing can be better suited to lead him to serious reflection on this subject, than her firm and undaunted perseverance in the path of duty. There have been instances in which the conscientious regard to duty, which has led a wife to make a public profession of religion in opposition to the wishes of her husband, has been instrumental of his seriousness and conversion. There is ground to hope, that the same means may be attended with the same effect in other cases. This should encourage females, in the circumstances here supposed, to go forward. They ought to consider, that the neglect of duty, and an attempt to please man rather than God, may be instrumental of confirming the prejudices of their husbands against religion, and of keeping them easy and contented, even while they are living "without hope and without God in the world."

The same reasons, which show that a wife ought not to be prevented from making a profession of religion, by the opposition of her husband, show with equal clearness, that one who is already a professor ought not to be kept from the table of her Lord by this means. The cases are exactly parallel. The husband, whose wife is a professor of religion, has no right to forbid her going to the holy Supper. A higher authority than his, has bid her go. This, and not his, she is under obligation to obey. Nor need she be alarmed at the consequences of doing her duty in this respect. He, who requires this of her, will support her in it.—She has much more reason to hope for peace, and the unmolested enjoyment of all her rights, as well as for the consolation of the divine presence, if she firmly adheres to her covenant engagements, and boldly discharges the duties which these involve than if she suffers herself to disobey the commands of her Savior, in consequence of opposition from man. Besides, there is yet in the mind of the public a sense of propriety sufficiently deep and general, to influence them to raise their voice against the man, who should deliberately manifest so much illiberality and intolerance, as to deny his wife the privilege of acting on this subject, agreeably to the dictates of her conscience.

EQUAL RIGHTS.

REVIEW.

An Essay on the Scripture doctrine of Atonement; showing its nature, its necessity, and its extent. To which is added, an Appendix, containing remarks on the Doctrine of Universal Salvation. By Caleb Burge, A. M. Pastor of the first Church in Glastenbury, Conn. Hartford: Peter B. Gleason & Co. 1822.

We take up the volume before us, not for the purpose of a mere critical analysis of the work, nor to show what more can be said on this subject. For we are aware that it has recently excited much attention, and enlisted no small portion of the theological talent of the day in its illustration. We read the volume with much interest: we consider it an able, judicious and profitable exhibition of the doctrine of the atonement: a work, calculated to edify christians, and to assist every class of readers in obtaining clear and correct views of the subject. We are glad to see so able, and in our view, so correct an exhibition of the atonement, brought before the public: and still more, to see it brought within such narrow and tangible limits. Without attempting or designing a comparison of it with other works on the same subject, we pronounce it *valuable*; and shall attempt to make our readers, in some measure acquainted with the author's sentiments, and with the manner in which he has treated the doctrine.

Before we proceed to this, however, we state that although Mr. B. appears to be fully established in his own mind, and to speak with frankness and decision, he has treated his subject with becoming mildness. He has shown no disposition, either to depress the feelings of an opponent, or to maintain the spirit of controversy. His object is to exhibit the *truth*, respecting the atonement, as he finds it revealed in scripture.— And he appears fully sensible, that the doctrine before him is a doctrine *purely* of divine revelation.

His Essay is divided into eight sections or chapters; to which he has added, what is technically called a "Conclusion." The first of these contains an introduction or general statement of the subject. In this general statement he shews the *importance* of an atonement in the scheme of gospel salvation, and the necessity of an atonement in order to render the salvation of sinners consistent with the revealed character of God. He argues this necessity from the fact of Christ's sufferings as a Mediator; from the plain declarations of scripture that he *ought* to suffer and *must* suffer; and from the important consideration, that sin is an offence against God in a public capacity, as the righteous Governor of the universe. Indeed, Mr. B. takes the ground, taken by many others, that the atonement of Christ had respect to the Divine character and government: that it was necessary, in order to vindicate the holiness of God and the righteousnes of his government, when he pardons him that believes in Christ Jesus.

Accordingly the passage of scripture, upon which he has grounded his subject, and which he has made the theme of discussion, is that of St. Paul; Rom. III. 25, 26 "Whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins which are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."—Now, from the very face of this passage, it appears that Christ is set forth as a propitiation *to declare the righteousness of God*, in the remission of sins; even to declare his righteousness that he might be *just*, or that he might *appear* just in pardoning them who believe in Christ. Hence, in the author's language. "It appears evident, that the doctrine, which the apostle designed to teach, is this; If God had not set forth Christ to shed his blood, for the remission of sins, he could not have been just, in saving sinners; nor can he now, unless they believe in Jesus." The atonement therefore, had respect to the character and government of God. It was intended, not only to reveal, but to vindicate, the holiness of his character, and the rectitude of his government in the salvation of sinners.

With this general view of the atonement, Mr. B. proceeds, in the second chapter of his Essay, to point out its necessity: and does this, by pointing out some obstacles which opposed the pardon of sinners, without an atonement. He supposes, however, and we think justly, that the atonement was not necessary, to conciliate the Divine feelings, and render God propitious; or, in other words, to render him compassionate towards sinners. For the scriptures furnish abundant evidence of Divine compassion towards them antecedently to the work, or the *design* of an atonement. Indeed, the very manner of its accomplishment is such, as to show, that if God had not been thus compassionate, no atonement, like that of Christ, would ever have been made. If God had not *loved* the world even with the tenderest compassion, he would not have promised, and in due time given up, his beloved Son to *die* for them. The atonement, therefore is the *effect* and not the *cause* of Divine compassion towards sinners: God ever has been as compassionate as he now is; and would have been so, had he not designed to *make* an atonement.

The obstacles, which opposed their pardon, without an atonement, were of a nature very different from all this: they were such as respected the law, the kingdom, and the character of God. As Mr. B. has stated them, they are these:

"1st. If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, "he would have been unjust to his holy law." For, as the law was perfectly just and good in itself, and as it condemned the sinner to eternal misery; so its penalty must be executed or its honor must be given up. And to give up the penalty of a just and good law, it is to do injustice to that law: it is treating it, as a just being would treat an unjust law: it would be saying, the law is *not* just, and its penalty ought *not* to be executed, even on transgressors.

Besides, if God pardoned sinners without an atonement, he would give up the *authority* of his law. Remove its penalty, and it ceases to *be* a law: it loses all its authority over the disobedient. So that an atonement was necessary, that sinners might be pardoned, and the justice of the law be maintained.

"2d. If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he must have been unjust to his kingdom." The kingdom of God, is composed of moral beings, who are governed by law, and not by mechanical influence. And as the law itself is just and good, and is therefore fit to be obeyed, if God does not enforce obedience, or does not punish the disobedient, he must be unjust to his moral kingdom. If one transgressor is pardoned without an atonement, others may be. And it will thus become impossible to deter them from disobedience, or to secure the interests of the kingdom. But, to give the author's views on this subject more clearly, we will state his last obstacle more at large.

"3d. If God had pardoned sinners, without any atonement, he would have been unjust to himself.

"Every good being, in order to do justice to his own character, must manifest his goodness. A wise being, in order to do justice to his character, must manifest his wisdom; or, at least, he must not manifest any thing, which is opposite to wisdom. All must allow, that, if one being should knowingly give a wrong representation of the character of another, who is wise and good, he would be very unjust. But, if a good and wise being should give a wrong representation of his own character, (if this were possible,) there would be the same injustice done, which there would, if the representation were made by another.—The injury done to the good character, would be the same, in the one case, as in the other.—Hence it must be evident, that, if God is good, if he is wise, and if he is consistent in his conduct, he must manifest his goodness and his wisdom, or be very unjust to his own character. But if God had pardoned sinners, without any atonement, he could not have manifested either his goodness, wisdom, or consistency of conduct. This may clearly appear from the following considerations.

" *First.* In this way, he could not have manifested any regard for holiness, or hatred of sin. By God's pardoning a sinner, is meant his receiving him to favor, and treating him as if he had never sinned. If, therefore, he had pardoned sinners, without any atonement, it must have been impossible, in the nature of things, for him to have given intelligent beings any reason to believe that he is more opposed to sin, than to holiness. For, in this case, he would have treated sinners in the same manner that he treats holy beings. He would have put no difference between the holy, and the profane. He would have manifested no more disapprobation of the disobedient, than of the obedient; nor any more complacency in the obedient, than in the disobedient. It is plain, therefore, that in this way, he could not have manifested any regard for holiness, nor hatred of sin. Hence, he would have done infinite injustice to his own character. He never could have appeared an object of holy love and reverence. Holy beings never could have felt safe in his hands. They must have lost that confidence and delight in his character, which resulted from contemplating him as a being, who loved righteousness and hated iniquity. But,

" If when mankind sinned, God had executed the penalty of his law upon them, this would have manifested his hatred of sin. By this, therefore, he would have appeared just to his own character. But in no other way, could he be just to himself, unless it were by something, which, as a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law, would make an equally bright display of his hatred of sin. If any thing of this kind could be done, which would manifest the divine hatred of sin, as fully as would the just punishment of it, this would be a satisfactory atonement. Out of respect to such an atonement, God might pardon sinners, and still be just to his own character. His pardoning sinners, on account of such an atonement, would not lead holy beings to distrust the integrity of his character. But, if God should pardon sinners, without such an atonement, his character must appear, at least, doubtful, if not decidedly bad. Holy beings, perceiving that he treated the holy and wicked alike, would be utterly unable to determine, from his conduct towards them, which acted most agreeably to his mind. In this situation, being unable to learn his character, they could not feel safe. His treating the unholy as holy beings ought to be treated, would, at least, lead them to suspect, that he might treat his holy subjects as unholy ones deserves to be treated. And thus, in their perplexity, they might fear him, but they could never love or trust him. But, if they perceived that he would never pardon sinners, without an atonement, this would show them his regard for holiness, and his hatred of sin, and would thus secure their confidence, and inspire their love.

" *Secondly.* If God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, he could not have manifested any wisdom in giving the law but would have been chargeable with the greatest inconsistency of conduct. It is evidently impossible for God to manifest any wisdom in giving a law, which could answer no valuable purpose. But, certainly, if he had entirely neglected to execute the law which he has given, this law must have been utterly useless. Nor would he have appeared merely destitute of wisdom, but his conduct would have involved glaring inconsistency. This inconsistency might have been thus stated: God has given a law to his creatures, which he refuses, or, at least, entirely neglects to support. This law is either good or not good. If it is not good, why did he give it? If it is good, why does he not execute it? In either case he must be chargeable with imperfection. If God has given a law to his creatures, which is not good, it must be because he either could not devise, or did not choose a good one. In the one case, he must be deficient in wisdom; in the other, he must be destitute of goodness.—But if the law be good, and God does not support it, this must be either because he is not *able*, or because he does not *choose* to support it. Here, therefore, must be either a deficiency of power, or, as before, a destitution of goodness. But if God had pardoned sinners without an atonement, all this must have followed. It must have been forever true, that God had given a law, and refused or neglected to support it; and that he had denounced evil against transgressors, and never fulfilled his threatening. In this case, his character could never have been cleared of the most glaring inconsistency and imperfection.

" It is necessary, therefore, that God should execute what he has threatened, unless something be done by way of atonement, which, as a substitute, will fully answer the same purpose, in order that his own character may remain unsullied, and he appear glorious in holiness." pp. 52—62.

These are the obstacles, which, in the author's view, oppose the pardon of sinners, without an atonement. And they prove clearly, that it had respect to the divine character and government; they seem to "decide the point, respecting the necessity and design of the atonement; that it was to *manifest the rectitude* of the Divine character; that God might be just in the justification of sinners."

This brings us to the great question "*in what does the atonement consist?* a question which, if we mistake not, Mr. B. has fairly met and faithfully answered, in the third and fourth chapters of his Essay. In the third chapter, he has met the inquiry, "Whether the sufferings of Christ were sufficient to remove the obstacles, which stood in the way of the pardon of sinners." In doing this, he first observes, that if the obstacles which opposed the pardon of sinners be not kept distinctly in view, we are not prepared to see what Christ has done to *remove* them. He then states them again and alludes to the difference of opinion among men, in what the atonement consists. And his general statement is, that it must consist in that work of Christ, which did in fact *remove* these obstacles. The question must be decided, on this principle.

He takes, however, the affirmative of his inquiry respecting the *sufferings* of Christ; he endeavors to show that his sufferings do in fact meet all the necessities of an atonement: that they remove all the obstacles, which oppose the pardon of sinners; and thus answer all the purposes which would be answered in executing the penalty of the law. And we see not why he has not established this point. On first perusing his work, our impression was, that he had spoken too exclusively in respect to sufferings. For, although aware that mere sufferings were amply sufficient to remove all the obstacles, which he has pointed out as opposing the pardon of sinners, and which mere obedience is no way calculated to remove, yet we were inclined to ask him, how he knew there were not other obstacles of a different nature existing, for the removal of which, active obedience was necessary — But on further reflection, we thought this might be improper. For he no where denies the *possible* existence of such obstacles. He only asserts his ignorance of their existence, and his belief that others will find it difficult to prove or even describe them. As we understand him he does not mean to deny, that in some way unknown to him, obedience *may be* necessary to constitute some part of the atonement. But he does mean to deny, that he has ever been able to discover any obstacles to the salvation of sinners, which the obedience of Christ is calculated to remove; or any reasons why an atonement was necessary which do not require it to consist in sufferings; or, at least in something, which in the sight of God, is an evil. By atonement, he evidently means some work of Christ which involves a *direct manifestation* of Divine displeasure against sin. And we ever have been and still are, unable to see how the active *obedience* of Christ involves any such manifestation.

In pursuing his argument he enquires what Christ *did* by way of suffering. His inquiry is, whether the sufferings of Christ make it manifest, that God respects his law, his kingdom and himself, that is, whether these sufferings, prove that he shows *as much* respect for his law, his kingdom, and himself as the execution of the penalty of the law would have shown. Under the first of these heads of inquiry, he states, that in order to give a satisfactory answer, it is necessary to be able to state clearly *how* the literal execution of its penalty would have manifested respect for the law; or in *what* this manifestation of respect would have consisted His meaning is (and it is well worthy of attention,) that the execution of the penalty, would not have manifested God's respect for the law, unless it had in his view, involved an evil in itself considered. Sin is an evil.—And the execution of the penalty, in view of Divine benevolence, is an evil, in itself considered.—Hence the sufferings of Christ to constitute an atonement for sinners, must be an evil, in themselves considered. In other words, if God would manifest respect for his law,he must submit to an *evil*,* in itself considered, in satisfying the demands of the law. For if he had executed its penalty on every transgressor, the manifestation of respect for it would have consisted not in merely *answering* its literal demands, but in submitting to an evil, on account of it.—Whatever evil God has submitted to,on account of the law,must manifest his respect for it,whether this be in the execution of its penalty or in the sufferings of Christ. And since Christ was the beloved of the Father, and his sufferings as a Mediator, were so exceedingly dreadful, they were an evil, in the sight of God peculiarly great; and his manifestation of respect for the law, by these sufferings, was equally great.

But do these sufferings manifest on the part of God *as much* respect for the law, as the execution of its penalty would have done? Or are they *as great* an evil in themselves considered as the misery of mankind would have been? To this question, the author has given a very ingenious, and, as we think, satisfactory answer. The sum of it is, that it is sufficient, if God *shows* as much respect for his

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"*By God's submitting to an evil is meant, his consenting that a thing should take place, which must be in its own nature, disagreeable to his benevolent heart, if viewed independently of all other things. The misery of mankind, which would have been the effect of the execution of the law, would have been such an evil." p. 25.

law, by these sufferings, as he would have shown, without them, in executing its penalty. But, if this had been executed, no one could have known how great an *evil* the misery of mankind was in the sight of God; because no one could then have known how much he *loved* them. Their misery would have been an evil, in his view, great, in proportion to the strength of his benevolence; and therefore must *appear* great to other beings, in proportion to their apprehension of the strength of his benevolence. But the strength of this never could have been manifested as it now is, if the penalty of the law had been executed; because, it is only in *Christ's sufferings* for sinners, that Divine love appears in its glorious fulness. Hence, it was not necessary, that these sufferings should appear to be so great an evil, in his view, as he has *now* manifested the misery of mankind to be, but only as great as he would have manifested it to be had Christ not suffered. And that Christ's sufferings *are* as great an evil in the view of God as he could have manifested the misery of mankind to be without these sufferings, must be admitted by all, who remember, that they were the painful and ignominious sufferings of one, well beloved of the Father. It follows, therefore, that God manifested *as much* respect for the law, by these sufferings, as he would have manifested without them, in executing its penalty.

By a similar process of reasoning, it is shown that by these sufferings God has manifested as much respect for his kingdom, and for himself, as could have been manifested without them, in executing the penalty of the law. For, if the execution of this penalty on sinners would deter other beings from sin; and if, in the view of such beings, the sufferings of Christ are as great an evil in the view of God as the misery of sinners, without these sufferings, could have been manifested to be, it follows, that the sufferings of Christ would deter other beings from sin, and thus maintain the honor of the Divine government as effectually as the execution of the penalty of the law. It follows, further, that in view of these sufferings, God would appear as gorious in holiness, and as much opposed to sin as he would, in executing the penalty of the law. So that, by the sufferings of Christ, all the obstacles which oppose the pardon of sinners, whether they respect the law, the kingdom, or the character of God, are as effectually removed, as they could have been without these sufferings, had the penalty of the law been executed on every transgressor.

But does the *obedience* of Christ remove these obstacles? Or does it constitute any part of the atonement? This question occupies the fourth chapter of Mr. B.'s Essay. And in attempting to answer it, he reminds his readers, that the atonement involved that which was, in itself considered, an *evil* in the sight of God. "It must be carefully remembered here, that if the execution of the penalty of the law, on transgressors, had not involved a real *evil*, in the view of God, his causing it to be executed could not have manifested any respect for his law. In case of the execution of the penalty, the manifestation of respect would not have consisted in merely satisfying its literal demands; but, rather, in submitting to an evil, for the sake of satisfying those demands." And the same remarks are equally applicable to the atonement of Christ. If, by this, God would manifest due respect for his law, his kingdom, and himself, he must submit to that which, in itself considered, must appear a real evil. Indeed, the atonement *did* involve that which was seen to be an evil by the Lawgiver, and felt to be such by the Mediator.

But the author shows clearly, that there was nothing in the mere obedience of Christ, that is, in his obedience to the moral law, which could possibly be an evil in the sight of God; nothing which constituted the least direct manifestation of Divine displeasure against sin, nothing, which would deter other moral beings from transgression; nor any thing, which would show God's respect for the law itself. Indeed, he shows that God could not be *just* to his law, his kingdom, nor himself in pardoning sinners, out of respect to the mere obedience of Christ: and hence, that this mere obedience could not answer any of those valuable purposes, which are required by an atonement.—He concludes, therefore, that the obedience of Christ forms no part of the atonement. But he does not rest this point on mere speculation or theory; that is, on arguments *a priori*. Having stated that the necessity of Christ's sufferings is made evident by the very event of his death; and that in all the types and figures of the atonement in the Old Testament, there was a direct reference to his sufferings; so that neither the priest nor the service, nor the altar was available, without the *blood* of the victim; he says,

"This respresentation also argues with the general tenor of scripture, on this subject. We have already examined a considerable number of passages which expressly point us to the death of Christ, as that which makes atonement. It may be shown moreover, from many other scriptures, that any thing belonging to our salvation, which may be considered a fruit of the atonement, is also grounded on the blood of Christ. If we are redeemed, or bought, the blood of Christ is the price, if we are cleansed, or sanctified, it is by the blood sprinkling; if we are reconciled, the blood of Christ hath broken down the partition wall. Indeed, every blessing of the gospel is a blood-bought blessing.

"Christ is abundantly represented as redeeming and purchasing his saints, as captives are redeemed from captivity, by the payment of a price. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." Gal. I. 4. "Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor." Eph. V. 2. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Tit. II. 14. "Ye are bought with a price." I. Cor. VII. 23. These passages have evident reference to the death of Christ, as the ransom, or price, which he gave for us. "The Church of God, which he hath purchased *with his own blood*." Acts XX. 28. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. I. Pet. I. 18.19.

"The atonement of Christ is that, which lays a foundation for our sanctification and deliverance from sin. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word." Eph. V. 25. 26. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards men appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*." Tit. III. 4. 5. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." John XVII. 19. But, according to the voice of inspiration, it is the blood, or death of Christ, which is available here. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. IX. 12." [See also verses 13. 14.] "The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary for sin, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."—Heb. XIII. 11. 12. And agreeably with this, the apostle John says, expressly, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1 John I. 7. pp. 132—134.

In like manner, he shows that it is through the atonement that sinners are brought into a state of *reconciliation* with God, that on account of it, they are *pardoned* and *justified*; and by virtue of it, *obtain salvation*: while, at the same time, all this is through the *blood* or the *sufferings* of Christ.—And he adds,

"The redeemed in heaven, undoubtedly, must know precisely what that is, on account of which they are admitted into that blissful world. Yet from a passage in the book of Revelation, which describes their heavenly worship, it appears, that they consider the blood of Christ as the foundation of all their glory. "And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, *by thy blood.*" Rev. v. 9.

"Thus the sufferings and death of Christ are singled, in scripture, and spoken of, by way of eminence, in a multitude of places, as being the *price* of our purchase, and as laying a foundation for our *sanctification*, for our *reconciliation* to God, for our *forgiveness*, and finally for our *eternal salvation* in heaven. The sufferings and death of Christ, too, completely secure all the ends for which atonement was necessary; remove all the obstacles, which stood in the way of God's showing favor to mankind, and making them eternally happy, after they had sinned; and answer all the valuable purposes, which could have been answered, by the execution of the penalty of the law. How, then, can there be any room to doubt, whether the atonement of Christ consisted in his sufferings and death?" pp. 138, 139.

Were it necessary, we might add to these quotations. But we think the author has shown, from the testimony of scripture, that the atonement consists, not in the obedience but in the sufferings of Christ; that these sufferings answer all the valuable purposes which could be answered without them, by executing the penalty of the law; and that the atonement had respect to the Divine character and was intended to vindicate, the holiness and justice of God, in the pardon of sinners.

Now this, we think, is obviously consistent with the doctrine of salvation, wholly by grace: a doctrine plainly and abundantly taught in the scriptures. And we find that Mr. B. had the same opinion. For he proceeds, in the fifth chapter of his Essay, to *show* that full atonement and salvation wholly by grace are consistent one with the other. He states that although some have found it difficult to reconcile these two things, their difficulty has probably arisen from mistaken views of the nature of Christ's atonement: that some understanding it to be, literally, a purchase, or the payment of debt, have inferred that if it be a full atonement, all men will be saved; others, that as it is evident, all will not be saved, the atonement could not be made for all: and others, that if sinners are saved, on account of the atonement, their pardon and salvation cannot be of grace. But Mr. B. affirms, and we think justly, that if the atonement consisted in the literal payment of a debt, there could be no grace in the acquittance of sinners; and also that atonement and actual salvation would be co-extensive.—He also affirms, that as the scriptures represent the pardon and salvation of sinners to be wholly by grace, the atonement *cannot* be the payment of a debt, nor strictly the nature of a purchase: and that this has, in his view, been made evident from what has already been said. Indeed, pardon or forgiveness, in its very nature, implies grace. To pardon a sinner, is to treat him better than he deserves; it is to release him from merited punishment and to confer on him an unmerited favor. So that pardon, on the ground of justice, is a contradiction in terms. The truth is, Christ paid no man's debt. And, although our deliverance is, in scripture, sometimes called a redemption, as captive prisoners are sometimes redeemed with money; and though Christ is called a ransom and we are said to be "bought with a price;" yet these are figurative expressions. Their meaning is to illustrate the idea of pardon, on the ground of Christ's atonement.—And though designed as an illustration of this subject, yet there remains this deep and broad distinction; that while sinners are pardoned of free grace, this is not true of the redemption of captives whose liberty is purchased. The scriptures abound with these figures or metaphors. And when they are understood metaphorically, as was evidently designed, they are consistent and instructive. Indeed, they cannot well be understood, in any other way. For,

"If sin is a debt, and also a disease, and Christ a price to pay the debt, and a physician to heal the disease, we are no more authorised to infer that he has paid the debt, than we are to conclude that he has healed the disease, which, we know, is not the fact. The truth is, neither debt, nor disease, does specifically describe the nature of sin. Nor does the payment of a debt, nor the healing of a disease, with any greater literal correctness, describe the work of the Redeemer." p. 160.

Hence, from what has been said, concerning the nature of the atonement, it appears that it does *not* consist in the payment of a debt, and also that it *is* consistent with free grace, in the pardon of sinners. So that a full atonement is perfectly consistent with salvation wholly by grace. Indeed, this appears from the very design of the atonement, which was not to *pay* the debt of the sinner, but to vindicate the holiness and justice of God, whom he *pardoned* or *forgave* this debt. It thus leaves every sinner guilty, and, in this way, admits the exercise of *grace*, in his pardon and salvation. And we add, no one will assume the position that the personal guilt of the sinner *is* unremoved, so long as he remains impenitent. Nay, regeneration does not remove the guilt of his former sins. For if this or even the atonement itself, actually removed the guilt of sin, there would be no room for pardon or forgiveness. The sinner might claim salvation, on the ground of justice.

[To be concluded in our next.]

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS,

No. VII.

Remarks.

1. The success which has attended missionary efforts affords encouragement to all the friends of the missionary cause. There are in every department of moral and religious duty correspondent encouragements and discouragements. One of the principal sources of discouragements is want of *immediate success.* "Those prompt charities," says an English writer, "are easy in which the benefit instantly and visibly follows the remedy. Few persons would withhold assistance from a suffering stranger who must evidently expire if deprived of it; but where the benefit is distant, where the means are only elementary and the result is afar off, where months and years must elapse before the seed sown in sorrow shall bring forth its harvest of joy,there the heart is too apt to become chilled, and our wishes, outrunning our expectations, refuse to expand in a field where the prospect of a crop is so distant. Combined with the delay which often attends the success of charitable exertions is the frequent inadequacy of the success when it comes to satisfy our sanguine expectations. We are apt not only to miscalculate the time of the harvest, but to exaggerate in our estimation of the expected quantity of the crop."—But when we look upon the missionary efforts of the present age there is no reason for discouragement in either of these respects. It is true that success has not, in all cases, been immediate, and, this, from the nature of the enterprize, and the difficulties attending it, could not have been expected.—Long established prejudices and habits and customs, especially those of a religious kind, which have enlisted the conscience, and which have been handed down by tradition from fathers to children through many generations, and which, of course, are connected with all their early associations, cannot be changed at once.

We might naturally suppose that many years must elapse before much fruit would be gathered.—The rugged soil is to be broken up and the seed is to be sown and time is to be allowed for it to take root and grow and bear fruit. Now considering what was to be done, and the inadequacy of the means, the very small and disproportionate number of laborers, and vastly *more* has been accomplished than we had a right to expect in so short a time. The seed is sown for an abundant harvest, even in India where the least success has been manifest. And in the Society and Sandwich Islands, and among the indians on our borders, the crop has already been partially gathered. And in all the places where the missionaries are laboring the prospective view is truly cheering

The signs of the present time are not to be mistaken. The standard of the cross is planted in almost every land. The nations that have long sit in darkness have seen a great light. The inhabitants of many of the Isles of the Pacific have cast away their idols, and the worship of Jehovah is established in not less than one hundred temples, where, not ten years ago, the darkness of heathenism universally prevailed. The pious exertions of Buchannan have resulted in an ecclesiastical establishment for British India; and christian teachers have penetrated into almost every part of that extensive and populous empire. By the zeal and efforts of the United Brethren, the light of the gospel has shone upon the inhospitable shores of Labrador and Greenland. Many of the hotentots of Africa, the most degraded of our race, have been raised to a state, in which they enjoy the blessings of civilization and christianity. The London Missionary Society and the American Board of Commissioners have extended their influence far and wide. The long neglected natives of our western wilderness are beginning to enjoy our own comforts and blessings. While missionaries have been sent abroad, a happy impulse has been given to the religious community at home. The minds and hearts of many of different classes and denominations have been opened and expanded "to perceive and feel the common brotherhood of all nations and of all human beings, *as made of one blood and Redeemed by one Blood.*" As a natural consequence a sense of obligation has been extensively felt "to do good to all men as we have opportunity." Societies for various charitable and religious objects have been formed and contributions in churches and congregations and meetings for prayer, and numerous individual subscriptions, donations and bequests have been made. Bible societies are extending the treasures of divine truth to the destitute of every land and language. Universal efforts are making to increase the number of able and faithful ministers of the gospel.—The Jews are beginning to yield the accumulated prejudices of eighteen centuries and to embrace Jesus Christ as the true Messiah. And are not these facts relative to the extension of Christianity in the present age sufficient to encourage the hearts of all the friends of Missions?

2. We learn that it is by means of missionary labors that heathen nations are to become civilized. For proof of this we have actual experiment, and are therefore in no danger of being deceived. When experiment is beyond our reach, speculations may be indulged and conclusions drawn by one and objected to by another. But when we are favored with experiment and proof equal to demonstration, it would be as criminal as it is absurd to shut our eyes on facts and deny their existence. Now in view of the facts contained in the preceding numbers, it appears

that the most, if not the only successful way, to *civilize* a savage people, is to *christianize* them.—Look at the Society Islands, and see what influence the gospel has had upon their civil state. The whole population of Otaheite has been civilized. Their whole character is changed. Activity has taken the place of indolence, and good will of enmity. All that is dear to the human heart, in the enjoyment and exercise of friendly feeling and intercourse, all that is tender in the relative affections of domestic life, is introduced to a whole society of human beings, but lately drenched in the polutions of vice and barbarity. 'Darkness is dispelled from the minds, treachery from the hearts, and murder from the social intercourse of a whole nation.' This yields an amount of blessing and a prospect of happiness, which will flow through many generations to come. Now what produced this great and happy change in their social and civil interests? The whole nation answers,—"It was the gospel of Christ, brought to us by the Missionaries."

The same effect you will notice has been produced, in a considerable degree, upon the *Sandwich* Islanders, and upon the Indians in our western forests, so far as the Gospel has gained an influence over them. Experiment now proves that christian principles are, and they *only* are adequate to transform an idle, dissolute, ignorant, wanderer of the forest into a laborious, prudent, and exemplary citizen. 'Other means have been tried without effect. But the plain preaching of the cross has done all this, and infinitely more. It has changed the whole current of desires and affections, imparted a strict conscientiousness, and induced those who were influenced by it, to lead lives of prayer, to practice all the christian virtues, and aspire after heavenly rewards.'

It is the natural tendency of the gospel to civilize. For it both requires holy principle and prescribes a pure morality. It has a power in its sanctions and motives above all things else, to subdue the corrupt and selfish propensities of the human heart. It inculcates disinterested love—the benevolent desire for the best interests of the human family.—Wherever, therefore, the gospel gains an influence, whether over an individual or a community, it reforms and purifies. Now the highest degree of civilization is, where there is the purest morality, and the only efficacious system of morality is contained in the Bible. It is a *divine* system, not only in its origin, but in its effects, and is not only "given by the inspiration of God," but it "is *profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." And hence we see the happy effects of christianity in all christian nations. By its transforming influence, it enlightens the dark, and reforms the wicked portions of the earth, and raises them to a participation of the blessings of a civilized community. Such, as we have seen, have already been its effects, and such will still be its effects wherever it is carried, for it has either a direct or an indirect influence over all our institutions, charitable, social and civil. Wherever the hand of charity has been most efficient, it has been under the influence of the gospel, which teaches us "to do good unto all men as we have opportunity." Wherever social happiness has been enjoyed in its purity, it has been under the influence of the gospel, which inculcates all the relative duties of the social state. Wherever civil liberty has been established and preserved, it has been the effect of the gospel which teaches the *equal* origin and rights of men. Indeed the gospel may justly be considered the indirect source of almost all temporal comforts.—Would we only compare the present condition of christian and pagan nations, this truth would appear obvious. By this comparison we should find, that to the influence of the gospel is to be attributed the existence of orphan houses, hospitals, and asylums for the relief and comfort of the distressed and afflicted. Before the introduction of Christianity there were not, nor are there now, in pagan lands, any systematic efforts for the alleviation of human misery. But in christian nations humane institutions are established for the relief and support of the friendless orphan, the disconsolate widow, the sick and needy stranger. The rights of man are better understood, and better systems of government are adopted. Comfort and happiness are more generally and equally diffused. Who then can doubt, that the gospel is to be the grand instrument of civilizing the uncivilized parts of the world? Wherever it is sent, it produces, upon the social and civil interests of the community, the most salutary effects. Like an overflowing river, which every where enriches and fertilizes its banks, the gospel has every where carried along with it an unfailing stream of mercy to civilize, to enoble, to bless the human family.

3. Humanity and philosophy as well as christian principle teach that it is the duty of all to be liberal in the missionary cause.—If such be the consequences of the successful introduction of the religion of the bible, (and none who will open their eyes upon events now transpiring in the world can doubt,) then hard must be the heart, and cruel the hand that refuses to be warm and liberal in the support of those means which are used to send the gospel to the destitute. Every genuine friend of liberty, civilization and human-

ity must be the friend of missions.

A system which has produced such good effects upon the community, and whose very principles ensure its salutary influence throughout all ages, should be sent to all people. Those who profess to regard the temporal comfort and improvement of their fellow-men, should shew the sincerity of their profession by aiding the missionary cause, which while its great design is to *save souls*, becomes the most powerful instrument of civilization and happiness in this life. W.

THE TWO APPRENTICES.

John Smart and Thomas Steady were fellow apprentices to a respectable tradesman in a considerable country town. Thomas was a serious, intelligent and amiable youth, who had been religiously educated under a pious uncle. John had more vivacity and quickness both of wit and temper, and was too much disposed to be what is called unlucky, but which is, in fact, wicked; he had seen nothing at his father's house (who was a wealthy farmer) but a jovial and merry life.

Their master was a worthy man in his dealings, and sometimes went to church; but did not concern himself about the religion of his family. He had no objection to the seriousness of Thomas, nor the levity of John, so that they attended diligently to their business.

Every Sunday both the boys went home to their respective friends, and spent the day as they had been accustomed. Thomas went to church with his uncle, attended very seriously to the minister, and when they returned he read the scriptures and other religious books. On the other hand, John generally spent the Sunday mornings in rambling about the fields; sometimes maying, or birds-nesting, blackberrying, or fishing, as opportunity served: and his afternoons and and evenings were commonly spent in indolence and sport, or in foolish talking and jesting in his father's family.

As they both served in their master's shop, and he was much absent, they had many opportunities for conversation, and the different manner in which they spent the Sabbath was often the subject. John was proud to relate his exploits and adventures; and Thomas, to whom they were always disagreeable, seldom failed to reprove or to admonish him.—These reproofs, though administered with temper and affection, would sometimes pierce his mind like a dagger; but the wounds were not deep, and therefore soon closed, and were forgotten; and not unfrequently the stroke was warded off by a kind of levity, which steels the mind against conviction, and renders it insensible to its own best interests.

On one occasion, however, their conversation became more serious, and its effects more important. On the preceding Sunday, John had been at home as usual, and was highly entertained by a strolling player, who had gained admission to his father's table, and greatly diverted them with jesting upon the Bible; turning many of its histories into ridicule, and particularly that of the prophet Jonah, who, by the miraculous power of God, was preserved three days alive in the belly of a whale. This profane ridicule John mistook for wit, as young people are apt to do, and thought it would furnish him with excellent weapons to attack Thomas, and overturn his principles.—Monday came, and John soon found an opportunity to commence his assault, which he did as follows:

John. Well, Thomas what was the parson's text yesterday? Was it about Jonah and his whale?

Thomas. No, John: his text was, "Good is the word of the Lord which he hath spoken."—What think you of it?

J. Think! Why, I wonder at your believing such stories as your Bible contains to be the word of God. If, instead of the whale swallowing Jonah, it had been said Jonah swallowed the whale, you'd believe it?

T. It is time enough to say so when I do. Yet, I confess, I would as soon believe that, as somethings you do.

J. How so? Sure I don't believe too much.

T. I mean you believe things much more absurd than I do, after all your ridicule.

J. What things?

T. What do you think of the Bible?

J. That it is a gross imposition on mankind: the contrivance of knaves and hypocrites.

T. What does it teach?

J. You best know that.

T. Does it teach wickedness or goodness?

J. Oh, it teaches many good things, to be sure.

T. Does it teach any evil ones?

J. Not that I know of.

T. Did you ever know any person made wicked by reading and studying the Bible?

J. No. But did you ever know of any made better by it?

T. Yes, surely. Farmer Newman used to swear, and lie, and cheat his neighbor; but now he prays, and reads, and loves his Bible; every body admires the alteration. So Ralph the waggoner used to get drunk, and quarrel, and beat his wife, and starve his children; but now he is one of the best of husbands and of fathers, and a very sober, good man. I could tell you of many other instances. Can you deny them?

J. I have heard such things; but what have they to do with the subject we are talking of?

T. I'll tell you John. You say the Bible was written by bad men, knaves and hypocrites; now, then, you believe that knaves and hypocrites conspired to write a book full of good things, and calculated to make men good and honest.

J. Suppose I allow them to be good men?

T. Then you must allow the Bible to be good and true; or else you believe that good men united to cheat the world in matters of the greatest importance. But this is not all. In rejecting christianity you must suppose, that twelve plain countrymen, the greatest part of whom were fishers, undertook to cheat the world with a new religion; not to obtain wealth, or honor, or ease, or power; but hatred and persecution, disgrace and contempt, poverty and stripes, imprisonment and death; that these men travelled over a great part of Asia, and of Europe, and in spite of the wisdom of philosophers, the influence of priests, and the power of princes, made innumerable converts, hundreds and thousands of whom gave up every thing, even life itself, with joy and satisfaction, to preserve a good conscience and the favor of God; and yet, all the while were knaves, and hypocrites, and impostors. Now tell me, John, is not this as bad as Jonah swallowing the whale?

John was a little confounded with these questions, for he did not expect the tables to be turned upon him thus. However, after a little recollection, he proceeded.

J. Truly, Thomas, I did not think you could have preached so; but tell me now, how is it you ascribe such wonderful effects and influence to the Bible? I have read some of the morals of Seneca and Plutarch, and other heathen philosophers; now, are not these books as good as the Bible, without its strange, unaccountable stories?

T. Dear John, did you ever know any body reformed by them? What good effect have they had on you?

J. Truly not much, I believe; but how is that?

T. I will tell you, John: it is the most strange of all these strange stories, as you call them, that does the business: I mean that of the birth, life, sufferings and death, resurrection and ascension of the Son of God.

J. How so?

T. In many respects the heathen taught the same moral duties as the Bible, though not so clearly, nor so perfectly; but they wanted the motives to virtue which the Bible alone can furnish.

J. Explain yourself, Thomas.

T. You know master has got two watches; one goes, the other does not; now, what is the reason? Have they not both the same wheels?

J. Aye; but the main spring is broken in one of them.

T. You are right, John; and this is the case here. It is the love of God which is the main spring of virtue and morality, and that is revealed only in the Bible. Here we learn, that God loved the world so as to give his Son for them; that Jesus Christ loved sinners so as to die for them: and so we learn to love him because he first loved us. Nor is this all The heathen had a faint hope indeed of a better world hereafter; but it was all conjecture and uncertainty. Now, by the gospel, "life and immortality are brought to light;" and we know, that "the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which hereafter shall be revealed."

John was all attention to this discourse, and forgot his infidel raillery. Thomas saw he had gained ground, and wished to push his advantage farther. My dear John, said he, do you ever think of these things? You know that you must die: is it not very desirable to die happy?

J. Truly; but is that possible? How can there be happiness in death?

T. I wish you had seen my father die. I was very young, but I never shall forget his departing words.

J. What were they?

T. Oh, I never shall forget them! "Thomas," said he, taking me by the hand, while we all stood weeping around his bed, the cold sweat of death was upon him, yet joy and happiness glistened in his countenance—"Thomas," said he, "love the Bible, study, and revere, and practice it; then will you live happy, and die joyfully, as I do."

Here a pause ensued. A tear stole down the cheek of Thomas, and another started in the eye of John. As soon as he could recover himself, Thomas said, "I wish you would go with me to hear our minister on Sunday next." John made no objection, and it was soon agreed. Little passed in the week, only John was much more serious than common. Sunday came, and John went. He had seldom been at church, and the scene was almost new to him.—The congregation was large and attentive; the minister animated and solemn. John was all eye and ear. The preacher named for his text, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" He described the danger of the sinner: John trembled. He opened the salvation of the gospel: he wept and hid his face. After service, John went home to his father's house; but it was with an arrow in his heart. His father thought him unwell, but he could not tell what ailed him. After dinner, the usual jests and sports began: he tried to smile, to please and pacify his friends; but he tried in vain. He was like a wounded bird that chirps and flutters, but can neither fly nor sing. He returned sooner than common to his master's, in order to meet with Thomas, and unbosom his mind to him. Thomas had a sympathizing heart, and while he rejoiced in the conviction of his companion, endeavored to soothe his troubled soul. John could jest with religion now no more. The infidel prejudices he had acquired at home, vanished like the vapours before the rising sun. He could no more question the character of Christ, because he loved him: he could no more despise the scriptures, because they were his daily food. In short, he became an eminent instance of converting grace. Through the remaining period of their apprenticeship, they took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company. PARVALUS.

N. Y. Miss. Mag.

ANECDOTE.

A gentleman passing by a poor, miserable beggar, wished him good day. "Sir," said the poor man, "I never had a bad one in my life." "No," said the gentleman, "why you have scarcely any clothes to cover you, and are obliged to beg. What do you say when we have frost and snow, and you have nothing to eat?" "If it be fair weather," replied the beggar, "I bless God for it; and whatever God does, I bless him for it; so that I never had a bad day in my life." "But why" continued the gentleman, "are you so well contented with God's doings? What would you say, if God would send you to hell?" "If he should, I have two arms, the one *faith*, the other *love*, with which I would embrace him, and carry him with me; and his presence would make *hell* itself a *heaven.*

POETRY.

For the Christian Magazine.

Christ had his sorrows. When he shed
His tears, O Palestine! for thee—
When all but weeping females fled,
In his dark hour of agony.
Christ had his sorrows—so must thou,
If thou wilt tread the path he trod—
O then, like him, submissive bow,
And love the sov'reignty of God!

Christ had his joys—but they were not
The joys the son of pleasure boasts—
Oh, no! 'twas when his spirit sought
Thy will, thy glory, God of Hosts!
Christ had his joys—and so hath he,
Who feels His spirit in his heart;
Who yields, O God! his all to thee,
And loves thy name, for what thou art!

Christ had his friends—his eye could trace,
In the long train of coming years,
The chosen children of his grace,
The full reward of all his tears.
These are his friends—and these are thine,
If thou to him hast bowed the knee;
And where these ransom'd millions shine,
Shall thy eternal mansion be! N.

⁂ We neglected in our last to give credit to the *Worcester Yeoman*, for the communication on Revivals of Religion.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Arora's liberal communication is received.

THE

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

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CHRISTIANITY ITS OWN WITNESS.

Man, from his infancy, is so familiar with the operations of nature around him, that some just idea of the relation of effects to their causes early, becomes a principle interwoven in the mind. He not only discovers a propensity to trace up both natural and moral phenomena to some antecedent events, which, from their connexion, might seem to be the real causes; he also possesses an almost perfect sagacity to discern the fitness of things, which, like an intellectual conscience, promptly decides on the credibility of these claims. There is something at once so simple and sublime in the true system of physical nature, as secures to its newly discovered principles the swiftest verdict both of reason and emotion. And the human mind not only recognizes with joy the light of truth, but feels a mysterious disquietude in the embrace of error. Every one, therefore, in his inquiries into natural science, is sensibly urged forward by these principles of his nature, as far as finite power and opposing prejudices will admit, towards a discovery of the hidden springs whose energy is the omnipotence of God.

The progress of astronomical researches furnishes an ample illustration of this remark. Though theories of the planetary motions have existed ever since the days of Egypt's wakeful shepherds, yet the restless mind of man was never satisfied; but reason, while she lingered in the successive mazes of Tycho and Ptolemy, still sought some other light—she knew not why, till Copernicus enthroned the sun and Newton pointed to the power which curbs the spheres. And there is something in those principles, so simple in itself—so like the counsels of the universal cause, that a single glance at them conveys to the understanding the heavenly expression of truth. Reason feels that she has reached the boundary of this field of being, and even curiosity can ask no more below.

But the powers of this internal perception are not confined to the region of natural science, they accompany the mind in all its religious and moral speculations.—They give a degree of stability to human reason which enables it to venture far from the shores of sense into the wide expanse where things are spiritually discerned. It is scarcely too much to suppose that this is the principle which links each created intelligence to the eternal mind—so God-like have been its operations, wherever it has burst the chains of prejudice and emerged from the darkness of sin.

To say nothing of the subordinate truths, which, by its assistance, have been elicited from the arcana of science, it is this which in all ages, has led the mind from nature up to God; and taught it the essential attributes of the Divinity. The confidence which men have reposed in the responses of this oracle within, is the ground of every conviction which belongs to natural relgion. Of this the Poet was aware when he made the father of our race thus describe the first workings of his thoughts.

"———As new waked from the soundest sleep,
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid
In balmy sweat———
Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turned,
And gazed a while the ample sky; till raised
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung;
About me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods and sunny plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these
Creatures that lived and moved and walked, or flew,
Myself I then perused.

———Thou sun, said I, fair light
And thou enlightened earth, so fresh and gay;
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods and plains,
And ye that live and move, fair creatures tell,
Tell, if ye saw how I came thus, how here?
Not of myself;———By some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power pre-eminent."

I need not say how true to nature this description is. There is no man who does not feel the same internal dictate whenever he goes forth among the works of God. We may be assured that we are approved by the consciences of men when we fix the charge of self-violence upon those who impiously ascribe the fair creation to the efficiency of chance. Human reason has ever been truer to her Maker than the human heart. Yet, dragged reluctantly into the rebellion, she is sometimes bribed and sometimes tortured for decisions, which, at the time, she suffers to falter on her lips, and renounces with the first indulgence of freedom.—Though I am aware that the errors of reason may sometimes be imputed to that frailty of her own which suffers her to be led astray by the pride of originality; yet, in either case, her severest labor seems to be an inward struggle to smother those responses, which, at least, *resemble* the inspirations of Omniscience.

If then, this principle of reason be allowed its agency in establishing the truth of natural religion, it must extend its influence beyond these limits. No reason can be assigned why the origin of revelation would not be accessible in the same way as the origin of nature, though the former were unknown. Much less can it be shown, that, after arriving at the knowledge of a sufficient cause, it is either unphilosophical or unsafe to return by the same steps to the discovery of its other characteristic effects. Surely, if the works of material nature retain such an impress of the Divinity as enables us to read in them his agency, and many of his attributes, we may expect to find in a system of truth, adapted to the state of man as an intellectual and moral being, such lineaments of that glorious design, which nature's light shows dwelling in the mind of God, as shall fully entitle it to the honor of being his fairest work, and to the regard, which, by consequence it claims from man.

From the contemplation of that being, who gave life and motion to the universe, and disposed all its parts with an evident regard to harmony and happiness—a being, possessed of infinite attributes—Benevolence, to guide the dictates of his will—Omniscience, to discover the surest means for its accomplishment—and Omnipotence, to command all the energies of matter and mind, we return with the certain conviction that there is no effect in the universe proportioned to the efficiency of such a cause, if the system of moral operations revealed in the bible, is not true. The mind is pained at the reflection. It instinctively abhors the idea of a being, infinitely intelligent and wise, existing without action, or operating in vain. Again, if we examine the christian religion—the features which it presents of whatever is beautiful in truth, or sublime in virtue, the marks of some design elevated by the majesty of its plans, and hallowed by the purity of its object, the leading influence which it exerts in advancing the moral dignity and happiness of man—these all proclaim that the God of nature only is equal to the effort manifested in the formation and conduct of the glorious scheme.

These two general reflections will be sufficient to satisfy the pious mind that the precious gospel is not a cunningly devised fable. For he has not, like other men, to struggle with a heart reluctant to admit the discovery of truth, which wounds his natural pride and inflicts on the self-complacent quietude of his bosom, the consciousness of guilt. Still a short analysis of the argument upon which such a conviction rests, may enable him to feel more distinctly the extent and firmness of the foundation on which his all relies; and may serve to kindle his affections into a more steady flame upon the altar of an unshaken trust in God.

The two following inquiries, then, lead to a more particular view of the considerations already suggested.

How may we infer from the character of God that he is the author of christianity?

And how may the same thing be inferred from the character of our religion itself?

To the former of these it may be replied

1st. That it is inconsistent with the benevolence of the Deity that he should not design for his creatures the most exalted happiness of which they are capable.

God is the former of our bodies and the father of our spirits. The springs of our being are in him, and each susceptibility of our nature is the gift of his creating hand. In some of these endowments lie the fairest proofs of the divine goodness which have sustained the speculations of natural religion.—In what an endless variety of beauty has the Creator wrapped the external world for no other perceptible purpose than to delight the corporeal senses of man! What a variety of social relations has he devised to excite the sensibilities and gratify the affections of the human breast! None of the noble passions that dilate the heart of patriotism or philanthropy are left to languish for want of an object. No human capacity must necessarily run to waste, no wish must of necessity, be made in in vain.

But while there is something in nature to exercise every power and to meet every innocent desire of man, in this incipient state of his existence, there is nothing imperishable as the mind on which its *immortal* desires can feed, if the bible is not true. Without the bible, the future world is a desert and eternity a winter to the soul! How, then, can it be consistent with the benevolence of God, conspicuous in the blessings of our present state, that he should be so indifferent to the immortal interests of the soul, as to give us no more knowledge of future retributions than the light of nature suggests; and absolutely more discernible by unassisted reason respecting the principles by which he will be guided in dispensing them. Will infinite goodness descend to secure the minutest happiness of man, and yet leave him a defenceless prey to the malignant arts of Satan? Can that be a hand of kindness, which carefully sustains our bark along the trembling stream of time that it may be wrecked upon the billows of eternity? If not, then the Creator has left no means untried, which infinite love could devise to save the souls of men.

2d. Our knowledge of God enables us to conclude that the means he employs to effect the spiritual welfare of his creatures are such as tend to assimilate them to his own moral likeness.

The blessed God knows that he is the happiest of all beings. He perceives, too, that his happiness flows from the perfections of his moral nature. It consists in the complacency which he feels in his own purity, integrity and benevolent affections. It cannot be, therefore, that the ultimate happiness, which he designs for man, is very different in kind from this. The creature who bears the natural image of his Maker, must be wretched in a spiritual existence without similar dispositions of soul. Endowed, as man is, with the perception and internal approbation of moral excellence, he cannot be made more miserable than by being brought unsanctified into eternity, whose light shall disclose to him his soul's irreparable void.—Man, then must resemble his Maker before his natural capacity for bliss can be supplied. Therefore we may certainly conclude that the designs of infinite benevolence embrace the best possible means for effecting such a renovation of the human character as will bring it to a near conformity with God. We are led by the light of reason to expect some interposition of the Deity to accomplish this purpose of his heart—some plan of salvation, not less conspicuous than the gospel of Christ.

II. How may it be inferred from the character of christianity itself that God is its author.

It was just remarked that the mind, in some measure enlightened by the truths of rational religion, naturally anticipates the discovery of some system of divine operation tending to the moral improvement of man. Let us then examine the christian religion, with the aid of such a criteria as are furnished to our minds, by our independent knowledge of God and his designs.

1st. The system of doctrines and duties contained in the bible bears evident marks of a divine original.

This remark applies to every truth and precept of the sacred volume. No portion of God's word shrinks from the ordeal challenged by such a claim. Even those doctrines which harmonize so far with the dictates of human wisdom, as not to be distinguished by a superficial view from the discoveries of reason, are found upon nearer inspection to leave their parallels infinitely behind, and to sustain relations manifestly divine.

But the God of the bible is a character in all points beyond the power of human invention to form. Men, so far from anticipating the peculiar features of the divine character have been slow to discern the master strokes by which it is delineated in revelation.—There is a tendency in the mind to give to its conceptions the shape of the ideas with which it is already familiar. Imagination itself cannot stretch its wild and wandering wing beyond the boundaries of human knowledge. Its most excentric flight is still among real existences; and its most anomalous creations are only the ideas of the mind modified or combined anew. A glance at the theism of the Ancients, among whom genius has reared its proudest monuments compels us to make no exception to this principle in favor of religion. Amidst all their researches in science and refinements in theoretical virtue, they never departed from the analogy of nature in their notions of a supreme being. The perfections of *Pater Omnipotens* did not differ in kind from human perfections. They were invested with human forms and impelled by human passions.—Their power was as much obedient to the laws of nature, and as much limited to the instrumentality of means as that of men. The wicked under the light of revelation are charged with the folly of estimating the perfections of God by the same rule in the language of the Psalmist, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."

But the imbecility of human reason is not the only thing which has limited its discoveries. A depraved heart has always encumbered its march. It has disordered or blinded its perceptions of evidence and often wholly diverted it from the pursuit of truth. The preposterous reasoning of unenlightened men, if there were no other account of the matter, might be all ascribed to the natural prejudices of the mind. The Savior intimates, John v. 44. that it was impossible for the Jews to perceive the evidence of his Messiahship, while they retained their carnal affections. Thus we see that the inadequacy of our finite apprehensions and the impulses of base desires unite to exclude from the mind of man a just knowledge of the true God. The description therefore of the being and attributes of the Deity, contained in the bible, is not a mere human production. The pencil which drew that matchless portrait was guided by the hand of the *Eternal.* The same, if necessary might be said of all the peculiar doctrines of revelation.

No less conspicuous is the divine origin of the morality taught in the bible. In comparing the works of pagan moralists with the scriptures, the christian, almost involuntarily, exclaims with the poet

"Great God, when once compared
with thine,
How mean their writings look!"

Place the ethics of Socrates and Seneca beside the sacred volume! The lore which shone on the moral midnight of paganism becomes rayless in the noonlight of christianity. Virtue was with them, as with us, a name for the highest moral excellence; yet scarcely two things in the universe are to be found, so wide of each other as the virtue of heathen philosophy and that of the bible. One is that union of qualities which forms the character of the proud hero—an union of valour, courage, bravery, force and fortitude, the other that group of graces which adorn the unassuming followers of Jesus—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. The first are not more inferior to the last in kind than in duration. The laurel fades and falls when the brow that wore it becomes cold in death. But the graces of the christian when they cease to be obscured by a body of sin, are constellated into a diadem to crown his immortal spirit.

The moral precepts of paganism respect only the external deportment, while those of christianity extend their dominion to the heart. They are the statutes by which an enlightened conscience sits to try the secret thoughts and affections of the heart. But how shall we account for such an important improvement upon "the philosophy, falsely so called," as we are presented with in the scriptures? It is perfectly natural to ascribe the former to the genius of man; for it displays the very imperfections which a finite capacity would overlook, and the errors which are, at this day, the offspring of a depraved taste. But the sacred books bear the impress of a more exalted original. Had their authors, then, more learning or acumen than the philosphers of polished Greece and Rome? Certainly not. Nor could they have obtained their notions of the peculiar morality of the bible from any source beside the oracle of heaven. He, who can believe that a heathen composed the sermon on the mount should not censure the credulity of him who believes in the mysteries of revelation.

2d. Christianity is the most important means in operation for accomplishing the ends of infinite benevolence.

We have seen that it is the gracious design of God to make men happy by communicating to them his own moral likeness; and that such a design accompanied by infinite wisdom and might, must go forth towards its accomplishment in a train of secondary causes the most eligible for the purpose.

The fundamental truths of christianity are the same with those of natural religion. No one disputes their salutary influence, wherever they have made an impression on the mind of man; nor can any one reasonably doubt that the power of this good influence is increased in proportion to the distinctness and permanency of such impressions. Allowing, therefore, that the abstract principles of religion are as legible on the page of nature as of revelation, if it is plain that the latter is attended with circumstances, which give to these principles a cogency and effect unknown in natural religion, and unfelt by the bosom which is a stranger to the gospel, then there can no longer be any doubt that christianity is a plan adopted by infinite wisdom for the moral renovation of man.

Now upon the strength of principles equally clear to the infidel and the christian we affirm that, aside from the distinctness and lustre which the bible, as a commentary upon the works of nature and providence, has given to moral truth, the christian religion infinitely transcends the religion of nature in its power to form the moral character into the image of God. Those truths in natural religion, which are plainest on the face of things, are still presented almost exclusively to the intellectual perception of men, and appeal to their feelings scarcely more than a geometrical proposition, while in the gospel they are bodied forth in the living examples, and addressed to every sense and sympathy of human nature.

The influence of example in the formation of character is exerted in two ways. In the first place, by presenting to our minds the abstract principles of moral action with the greatest possible distinctness.

Not only the dreams of fancy, but the deductions and demonstrations of reason itself, never attain to that life and reality, nor to that degree of familiarity with the thoughts, which accompany sensible knowledge. The power of contemplating those truths, which, like the relations in pure mathematics, have no types nor illustrations in the external world, is among the last acquisitions of the mind; and the fundamental doctrines of religion which by the methods of revelation are now made plain to the simplest capacity, if they could be approached only by abstraction, might have remained forever remote from the apprehension of the mass of mankind. The love of country is a passion, which, in a greater or less degree, pervades the recesses of every bosom. Yet no one can peruse the story of Regulus without feeling that his idea of patriotism is improved and deepened by the contemplation of such an example? We may safely presume that the nature of moral principles is rendered as much more intelligible through the medium of actions, as the Elements of Euclid through that of diagrams. Whatever things God has allied in nature, are studied with the greatest advantage; and we might as well hope to comprehend the beauty of the human countenance from a verbal definition of it, as to gain an adequate idea of moral attributes from the mere *fitness of things.* When, therefore, we behold in revelation the principles of natural religion embodied in a palpable form; the perfections of God exemplified in an interesting course of divine conduct towards men; and the whole adapted to the powers of the human understanding; we are compelled to believe that christianity is the offspring of that divine benevolence which designed that the knowledge of God should effect the renovation of man.

But this is not all—the influence of example in the second place, is exerted by its exciting the sympathetic emotion of virtue.—The sympathetic emotion of virtue is that feeling which arises in our minds on seeing or contemplating a virtuous action, disposing us in general to acts of a similar nature. For example, if we behold or read of a signal instance of gratitude, our admiration of the person is accompanied by a desire to perform acts of gratitude without any object. This latter is the emotion of which we speak; an emotion most favorable to the formation of moral character since it is excited by virtuous examples only and secretly prompts the mind to seek occasions for the useful exercise of virtuous principles and feelings. Lord Kaimes to whom we are already indebted, speaks of the utility of this emotion in the following words:

"The emotion under consideration bestows upon good example the utmost influence by prompting us to imitate what we admire. This singular emotion will readily find an object to exert itself upon, and at any rate it never exists without producing some effect, because virtuous emotions of that sort are in some degree an exercise of virtue; they are a mental exercise at least if they appear not externally.—And every exercise of virtue, internal and external, leads to habit; for a disposition or propensity of the mind like a limb of the body becomes stronger by exercise.—Thus by proper discipline every person may acquire a settled habit of virtue, intercourse with men of worth, histories of generous and disinterested actions, and frequent meditation upon them, keep the sympathetic emotion in constant exercise, which, by degrees introduces a habit, and confirms the authority of virtue."

Who can describe the effect of Regulus' generous conduct upon the Roman Senate, at the moment when he needed only have spoken one word and it would have restored him to his liberty, his estate his dignity, his wife, his children, and his country—but that word appearing to him contrary to the honor and welfare of the state, he firmly renounced his home, and all that is dear to humanity, for exile, torture and the cross! We may well imagine that every breast beat high with the courage and patriotic love, so conspicuous in their illustrious friend, and longed for a suitable opportunity to display its zeal in similar acts of devotedness. Never did patriotism taught by philosophy or celebrated in song, produce an impression like this; because while speculation improves the intellect, and poetry delights the fancy, it is only the eloquence of example that can reach the deeper sympathies of the soul.

Now the system of religious truth which purports to have been revealed from heaven is most happily adapted to this susceptibility of our natures. However clearly the attributes of God were impressed upon the creation, their feeble appeal was made to the understanding, not to the feelings of the heart. The natural earth and heavens, without the index of revelation, would have been almost a blank, as to any moral meaning, and proportionably dull in moral effect. The absence of some perfect example which the christian might admire and imitate, would be such a deficiency in the means of his moral health and happiness as nature would experience, if the sun from this moment should become a rayless world of ice.—But in the bible the truths of natural religion are clothed with the forms of intelligible actions ; and the Deity, no longer perceived *only* in the clouds and winds, approaches man in the known and intimate relations, of father, friend, Savior, judge and rewarder. He has not only delineated his character in verbal expressions of his mind and will, but has come forth in those overtures of providence and grace which are calculated to appeal most powerfully to the sympathetic emotions of men.—The divine conduct towards the Jews, redemption by Christ, the life, sufferings and death of the Savior, the zeal and devotedness of inspired men, are so many features of the deity, in which, " we behold with open face, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

God therefore must be the author of revelations, or their exists in the universe an intelligent, benevolent, and infinite cause, criminally unemployed—christianity must be from above : or weak and depraved man has transcended the omniscience, efficiency, and grace of Jehovah, in the discovery and application of means to accomplish the purposes of the divine will. H.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

The religious instruction of children and youth is a topic which ought frequently to be introduced and should be insisted on with more special earnestness, where there is evidence that the duty of giving such instruction is by many viewed with indifference and neglect. To my own mind, it has long appeared plain, that if any one duty could be proved to be reasonable, that of giving early religious instruction was a duty of that nature and that in nothing could, in consistency, be made to appear more palpable and striking than in a neglect to give religious instruction among those parents who acknowledged the importance of religion.

My design, in this paper, is to address parents affectionately, yet faithfully, and to urge, the reasonableness and importance of this duty in a way to produce conviction and cause a discharge of this serious and interesting obligation of parents to their children.

In the first place, the religious instruction of children is possible. It is no impracticable duty that is now recommended.

What has been done, may be done again; and religious instruction has often been bestowed by parents on their children. It has been probably given not only by the learned, who might be supposed to have more ability of imparting it; but by thousands in the common walks of life, with ordinary opportunities of gaining information. Nor does it require that children themselves should be gifted with any extraordinary powers of mind, in order to be capable of receiving instruction of this nature. As soon and as early as a child can receive any useful instruction, it can receive the first elements of religious knowledge. None doubt the possibility of teaching children on other subjects than religion. But the same capacity of acquiring and retaining instruction which they manifest in relation to other subjects is suited, also, to acquiring and retaining religious knowledge.

It has, indeed, been often found easier to give religious instruction than any other. The child is very easily interested in such representations as are suitable to be given him respecting God, and in many scripture narratives, such for instance, as the history of Abel, of Joseph, of Daniel, and others of the same kind. Their questions and observations, when their attention is turned to such subjects, frequently shew, how much interest they feel in this kind of instruction and how much more capable they are of understanding it, than many seem to suppose, indeed, may it not be said, with too much truth, that religious knowledge is sometimes more interesting to the children, than to the parents, and that children are, in many cases, more ready to receive some knowledge of their God, their Savior, the scriptures and their duty, than parents are to afford it either by personal instruction, or by encouraging others to impart it to them.

When children become interested in the objects which animate and inanimate nature presents, it is, evidently, possible to refer them to the Great Author. When they perceive their relation to their earthly parents and are capable of realizing their obligations of love, gratitude and obedience to them, is it not possible, to tell them of a heavenly parent to whom they are under still stronger obligations? Is it impossible, that they should be early taught to act with a reference to the all-seeing eye of God, to seek to please him and to fear his displeasure? All this, and much more, is not only possible, but easy.

As it respects the possibility of giving religious instruction to children, there cannot be ground for controversy. Knowledge, much more difficult, is taught them both at home and at school, and at both, it is possible for this kind of information to be imparted, if parents encourage it. Considering it therefore, as now sufficiently proved, that the religious instruction of children is possible I will proceed one step further and endeavor to show, in the second place, that it is right to impart it.

What it is possible to do is not always right to be done: but, in respect to giving children some knowledge of religion, I hope it may be shown that parents have a right to give it, if they are disposed; and are not liable to be impeached for any inconsistency, or for taking any improper liberty with their children. In what age do I live, that there should be any call for a vindication like this! But we proceed, to show the right of parents in this respect.

It may, perhaps, be taken for granted, that parents have a right to give their children some instruction of some kind or other. They may teach them to speak their mother tongue, to read, or they may obtain others to teach them, they may have them instructed in grammar, and in other branches of school education. Parents have a right, it will be conceded, to train their children to some employment, and give them much instruction relating to the ordinary concerns of domestic and social life as they judge expedient and useful. All this is readily granted; and none object, that by it any injury is done to the child, or that any natural right infringed. But what shall we say respecting the right of giving children religious instruction?

It is not strange, that violent opposition to religion should have invented every mode of attacking and destroying it; and that among other methods it resorted to this, namely, asserting that it was wrong to give religious instruction. But it was right, I suppose, to give this irreligious instruction to parents.

But why wrong to give religious instruction to children? It is said to be an infringement of their liberty; exposing them to errors and depriving them of the freedom of choosing a religion for themselves. This is the whole weight of the objection. Let us admit it, if reasonable; and if not, let us reject it. If this reasoning could be supposed valid against religious instruction, it would be equally so against other kinds: And I think, one may modestly undertake, to show, that if, on this principle, religious instruction is wrong, it is wrong, likewise to give that instruction to which we have already referred. Let the child grow up untaught to speak English that he may choose a language for himself—give him no instruction as to reading, for you may, possibly, instruct him wrongly and lead him into some erroneous mode of reading—as for grammar—wait till the grammarians have settled all their disputes.—

Do not teach your sons how to carry on a farm for there are different opinions, your mode may not in all respects, be best—you deprive your son of his liberty by instructing him in your way—let him grow up in entire ignorance, and then he will be better able to choose for himself. You see then, what this specious reasoning about leaving children at their liberty amounts to, when applied to other subjects. I venture to assert that it would reduce us to absolute barbarism in one or two generations.

" Let them grow up and choose for themselves." Will they be better able to choose for themselves, when you have left them ignorant of the very first principles which may assist their choice. You may give them no instruction on religious subjects, but they will form some crude conceptions and these will render a choice more difficult than your riper instructions. There will be those who will endeavor to prejudice their minds against every thing serious: and will this prepare them for a more correct judgment? You do not thus leave your children at liberty to judge without any bias: for, so far as they are influenced by your opinions, they will be induced by your neglect of giving them religious instruction, to believe that all religion is vain, else you would have taught them its doctrines and its duties, as you taught them other things which you considered important. Let every parent, therefore, understand that by giving their children no religious instruction they are exciting a strong prejudice against all religion, and doing as much as to say to their children, "It is all a fiction." But, perhaps it may be replied that such children are still at liberty to choose religion, if they ever have any inclination. And if you give your children religious instruction and such as you esteem to be most judicious and important; are they not still, left to choose for themselves, if they see cause to change in any respects their religious views. You may be parents, in this respect, and cause your children to be instructed—and still not assume to be Popes, and claim an absolute infallibility from which your children shall never make an appeal.

Though, in acccompanying the many important truths with which you store the memories of your children, there may be some exposure to error—it is still right to impart religious instruction.—Though you are not to expose them to well known and pernicious errors, yet the evident and important truths which will be imparted by such serious instruction will do them vastly more good, than the supposed errors can do them injury. And you will be much more liable to the charge of injustice and cruelty to your children, by depriving them of opportunities of imbibing those fundamental truths and maxims, which should lead them to fear

God and to keep his commandments; than you would be to expose them to the possibility of such error, as may not be inconsistent with their morals or their piety.

I hope we may now in view of the reasons, which have been offered, assert with the confidence of truth, that it is the right of parents to cause their children to be religiously instructed. They have a right to give immediate personal instruction to their offspring, in their families on the Sabbath and at other times, if they choose. They have a right to cause them to be thus taught at schools. It is as much the right and privilege of a parent to request this branch of instruction to be imparted to their children at school, as any other branch of learning. Nor have those who wave the right in their own case any more right to forbid those who are disposed to have their own children religiously instructed at school, than they have to forbid grammar, or arithmetic, or geography, or history or any branch to which some are attending, whil e others are omitting it. And teachers have as perfect and full a right to give religious lessons to those children, whose parents do not absolutely forbid it, as they have to give any other lessons. I have attempted to show, first, the possibility, and secondly, the right of giving religious instruction to children. So far, I trust our way is sufficiently clear. But as that may be possible which may still not be right, so it may in some cases be abstractly considered right to do what still we may not, in duty be bound to perform. It is therefore proper to show,

In the third place, that it is a duty to give religious instruction to children.

1. If parents are allowed to have any authority over their children; then, it is easy to see that parents and children are under the authority of that Heavenly parent in whom we all live and move and have our being. But the religious instruction of children is what that parent requires. He required Jews to teach their children his precepts diligently, when they sat in their houses, and when they walked by the way, when they laid down, and when they rose up. It is the same as a divine command to all parents to give their children religious instruction, when they read the commendation bestowed on Abraham by the Supreme, in the following terms. "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." The wise man has given this general rule—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." But not to multiply passages unnecessarily, let me only adduce one from the epistles of Paul. "Parents, provoke not your children

to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Thus do the scriptures enjoin this duty—and show it to be the will and command of God, that it should be performed. And were not the duty so expressly and fully enjoined, it might be argued from other considerations.

2. It is, indeed, the duty of parents to instruct their offspring on subjects, by no means so important as those involved in a religious education. It is their duty to impart those maxims of conduct, which they may need in life—and to see that their minds are furnished betimes, with those useful rudiments of common learning which our happy country, and especially, this happy part of it, render easily attainable. But if this is their duty, how much more is it binding upon them to connect with their other instructions, that which will be so necessary to make the other useful. How much more are they bound to inculcate those moral and religious principles, which will keep their children from being more injurious to the world by their other learning—and lead them to live, and act, and think, as under the inspection, and subject to the control of a Supreme Being—and dependant on him for happiness here and hereafter.

I hope we are now prepared, in the fourth place, for the conclusion, that if to give religious instruction to children is what is possible to be done, and right to be done—and a duty; then it is no less evident, that it is a *very important* duty. If any good may be done by religious instruction, great good may be done. Deep and lasting impressions may be made, favorable to virtue und piety. The influence of early education is allowed to be very great; and, therefore, the duty of the parents and instructors of children, is very commanding in respect to affording important religious instruction. Early should those holy principles be instilled, which children may afterwards find to be the support of their virtue, the solace of their affliction, their hope in death, and their preparation for the state of retribution.—If it is a duty for parents to regard the welfare of their children, then to advance their highest interests, must be their most important duty.

Be persuaded, therefore, parents, as you regard your children and your duty, to be not merely willing, but forward, to improve every opportunity of furnishing your children with a rich store of useful knowledge. Such instruction enforced as it should be, by your own example, will be to them the most valuable inheritance you can leave them—and the most likely to dispose them to bless your memory, when they are called to weep over your grave.

REVIEW.

(*Concluded from page* 151.)

In the sixth chapter of his Essay, however, Mr. B. has answered the following *objection* to his views of the subject.

"The scriptures evidently teach that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners; and if he did thus die, they must be exempted. If A. enlist into the army, and B. offer to go in his room, and is accepted, most certainly A. is exempted from service. So, if Christ really tasted death for every man, and died in their *room* and *stead*, then they must be exempted." P. 167.

In reply he states, that those passages of scripture, which have been considered as teaching that Christ died actually in our room and stead, are to be considered metaphorically; otherwise there could be no grace in the deliverance of a sinner from punishment. They may be regarded as communicating this general idea, that as B's consenting to perform the services, which A. stood engaged to perform, is the ground, on which A. is released; and as the payment of money, or some other equivalent, is the ground of the release of a captive; so the death of Christ is the ground, on which believing sinners are pardoned and saved." He states further, that the execution of a righteous penalty on a transgressor is said to remove his guilt or his desert of punishment; and hence, that if sinners could endure this penalty, and yet live, their guilt, or ill desert, could thus be removed.—But, if their guilt, or ill desert, could thus be removed, and this were considered a valuable object, in executing the penalty of the law, he admits, this is an object, which the death of Christ does not, and cannot effect, because guilt, or ill desert, is a personal thing, not to be removed but by the suffering of the penalty, by the guilty person himself. He states, however, that it was not necessary, in order to make a full atonement, that the sufferings of Christ should actually remove the guilt of sinners. It was sufficient, if these sufferings removed those obstacles, in the way of their pardon, which have been considered. Had this ill desert been removed, it would have precluded both the necessity and the possibility of pardon, according to the common use of this term.—For he adds,

"If, then, Christ had removed or taken away the ill desert of sinners, there could be no grace manifested in their salvation. In this sense, therefore, the death of Christ cannot be considered as being in the room and stead of sinners. Hence, whether the scriptures do teach, that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, must depend entirely, on the meaning, which is affixed to these terms.—If we understand by them, that the sufferings of Christ have answered all the purposes which the execution of the penalty of the law would have answered and occasioned, provided it had been possible for sinners to survive this execution, both in respect to supporting the divine government, and removing the ill desert of sinners, it is evident, the scriptures teach no such doctrine. But, if nothing more be intended, by Christ's dying in our room and stead, than that he suffered that it might clearly appear, that God would support and honor his law, that the divine character might be clearly exhibited and vindicated, and the highest interest of the universe secured; in short, that God might be just to his law, to his character, and to his kingdom, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus; then it is, unquestionably, a doctrine plainly taught in scripture.

"If, however, this be all that is intended, by this form of speech, in our room, and in our stead, it may not be unsuitable to inquire whether other words, and forms of expression, might not be used which would communicate the idea, with much greater clearness. Notwithstanding the long practice even of the best writers has sanctioned the use of these terms; yet surely we should not on that account, indulge such a fondness for them, as to refuse to lay them aside, if continuing the use of them would endanger the salvation of one soul, who, through ignorance, or willingness to be deluded, might infer from them, that since Christ has died in our room and stead, we certainly cannot be liable to death. If, indeed, the terms were scriptural, these observations might with more appearance of justice, be deemed sacrilegious; though, even in that case they would, like many other scripture phrases, need explanation. But, the truth is, that though they have been so long and so often used, that many probably, are scarcely aware of the fact, yet they really have no place in the Bible." pp. 171—173.

The passages, "Christ died for us; for the ungodly; for sinners, &c." are far from proving, that he died in our room and stead; they prove rather that he died for our benefit, or on our account. But they do not prove, that we must have been made a sin offering, in the same sense that he was, if he had not died for us. For although it is said, "he died for our sins," yet no one will affirm that he died instead of our sins.

Indeed, the sufferings of Christ were not strictly punitive: they were not the very punishment due to sinners, or the literal penalty of the law. They were a substitute for something. And when we recollect the obstacles, in the way of God's pardoning sinners, which they were designed to remove, and did remove, we may readily percieve the precise object of their substitution. In the author's language, "the sufferings of Christ were a substitute for the *execution* of the penalty, rather than for the penalty itself."

For it is obvious, that the penalty of the law, and the execution of the penalty, are distinct things. The penalty consists in *sufferings*, endured by the guilty: but the execution of the penalty, consists in the *infliction* of sufferings, by the offended Lawgiver. And since it is the execution of the penalty, on transgressors, which would display the holiness and justice of God, so the sufferings of Christ, in order to display this holiness and justice, must be a substitute for the *execution* of the penalty. As Mr. B. says,

"It is evident, the execution of the penalty of a law, and the suffering of an offender, which is a consequence of such an execution, are distinct things, and exhibit different characters. One exhibits the character of him, who enforces the law; and the other, the character of him who suffers the penalty. Since these are different things, it must be evident also, that the sufferings of Christ must have been designed as a substitute for the execution of the penalty, rather than for the punishment due to sinners. For it must be obvious, that the sufferings of Christ must have been designed to exhibit the character of God, honoring and supporting his law, showing his opposition to sin, and promoting the interest of his kingdom, rather than to make an exhibition of the character of sinners, in endless misery, enduring the punishment due to them for sin, and thus removing their ill desert." pp. 180, 181.

Hence, it is evident that Christ did not die in the *room* and *stead* of sinners; or that his sufferings were not the very penalty of the law, but were a substitute for the *execution* of its penalty. And it follows, that his sufferings did not actually remove the guilt of sinners. But this view of the atonement leads us to "an inquiry concerning imputation," which occupies the seventh chapter of Mr. B's Essay. His statement of the case is,

"It has been the opinion of many, that for guilty men to be justified through Christ, it is necessary that his righteousness should be so imputed to him, as to be a ground on which they may be considered righteous in law. For, say they, there must be a perfect righteousness somewhere, to lay a foundation for justification; and as mankind have no such righteousness of their own, the righteousness of Christ must be imputed to them."

Now, the inquiry is, whether this *is* necessary, and whether the righteousness of Christ, is *in fact*, so imputed to believers, as to become their righteousness, in a law sense. Do the scriptures any where affirm, that Christ's righteousness is so imputed to them, as to become their righteousness? We venture to question, whether there be any such revelation as this. We have never seen those passages, which convey such a sentiment: nor have we been led to suppose, that such an imputation of Christ's righteousness is necessary.

We well remember, that Abraham's faith was said to be imputed to him for righteousness: and that from this, it was argued that the faith of every believer is imputed to him for righteousness.—But, we have yet to learn from scripture, that Christ's righteousness is so imputed to them, as to become *their* righteousness. Indeed, it seems impossible, that their faith *can* so receive the righteousness of Christ, as to make it their own.

Were it admitted, however, that Christ's righteousness is supposed to be thus imputed, it is still liable to this capital objection; that it rests the salvation of sinners wholly on the principles of law and justice, which is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel. For, if Christ, as a legal substitute for any part of mankind, has suffered the full penalty of the law, then justice, in every sense, is satisfied; it can require no more sufferings. Nay, justice will then demand their exemption from punishment. On this ground, therefore, no forgiveness or grace could be exercised, in releasing them from punishment; it would only be treating them justly.

"So, if Christ, as a legal substitute for believers, has obeyed the law, so that God justifies them, and makes them happy, out of respect to the righteousness of Christ, *considered as their's*, then saints are really justified by works, in a law sense; not, indeed, by their own works, but by the works of their legal substitute. If saints are justified by the obedience of their substitute, it is the same thing as if they were justified by their own obedience, so far as it respects their being justified by works. It is evidently, all on the principles of law and justice; and there is no grace in the matter.—If a man engage to perform a certain work, for a reward which is proposed, it makes no difference, whether he do the work himself, or procure another to do it for him. Let the work be done according to agreement, and he is entitled to his reward. So, if Christ has done for believers, the work which the law required them to do, God is now bound, on the principles of strict justice, to bestow the promised reward, eternal life. There is no grace, but stern, unbending justice here."—pp. 202, 203.

But, if it be said, saints are unworthy in themselves, and so do not deserve happiness; still, they are not unworthy, in the sense in which they are viewed as possessing Christ's perfect righteousness. So far from it, that in this sense, they merit eternal happiness, by their substituted perfect righteousness. However guilty in themselves, still, when viewed as having a perfect righteousness from Christ, they must be made happy, according to strict justice. For, on this scheme, they have suffered, in him, all that they deserve to suffer. And, as all their ill desert is thus done away, and they now have a perfect righteousness, they can make a legal demand of happiness. Nor, does it alter the case, to affirm that it was grace in Christ, to take the place of transgressors. It removes no difficulty. If he suffered and obeyed as a legal substitute, there is no grace in exempting believers from punishment, and in making them happy! All yet, proceeds on the principles of law and justice; contrary to the plain testimony of the gospel, that the salvation of sinners is all of grace.—For, in the gospel, their salvation is said to be, not of works, nor of law; but entirely by another dispensation. Besides, the scheme before us, is absurd in itself. In a law sense, one being *cannot* suffer, nor obey, for another. The law does not admit the obedience of one being, in behalf of another. Its unbending language is—"The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon *him:* and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon *him.*"

Now, these objections to the doctrine of imputation, appear insuperable. We know not how they can be obviated And from the view already given of the nature and design of the atonement, we do not feel it necessary, that they should be obviated. For, if the atonement of Christ has removed all the obstacles, which opposed their salvation, we are unable to see, why God may not *pardon* the guilt, or *remit* the just punishment of believers. And having done this, why he may not make them eternally happy in heaven, on account of Christ's atonement; even, though they remain utterly unworthy in themselves. Indeed, the tendency of this procedure is such, as will prepare them to unite in the very song of the redeemed, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood; to him be glory forever and ever."

It must, however, be remembered, that faith in the blood of Christ is necessary, that sinners may be saved. This was remembered by the author. And in the eighth chapter of his Essay, he has assigned some reasons *why* this faith is necessary. Indeed, this is as necessary, in order to obtain salvation, as the atonement itself was; and substantially for the same reasons. For, if God should pardon the sinner, who has no faith, and who, of course, is not reconciled to the Savior, he would pardon and save one who is yet a rebel: one, who is yet impenitent and opposed to the law. He could not, therefore, show due respect for his law; nor, indeed, for his government. To pardon one who has no faith in Christ, would be to give up the honor of the law, and the rectitude of his government. Indeed, if God should pardon and justify sinners, who have no faith, he could not appear just to his own character.

"By the requirements and threatenings of his law, he manifested a regard for holiness, and an abhorance of sin. In giving his beloved son to die on the cross, to make an atonement for sin, he manifested the same feelings, and displayed the same glorious character. But, should he now justify those, who have no faith in the atonement, no acquiescence in it, and no approbation for it, he would counteract, and contradict what has thus been manifested in his law, and in the sufferings and death of Christ. In doing this, he would justify those who were opposed to Christ, which would be an implicit acknowledgment that their opposition was right; indeed, it would be taking part with them in their opposition. Hence his character would appear inconsistent and suspicious. Holy beings would be at a loss, what opinion they might form, respecting his real feelings. They might fear him; but they would lose their confidence, and would scarcely find it in their hearts to love him. Since, therefore, all who are destitute of faith in the blood of Christ are opposed to him, it is impossible that any such can ever be justified.-- Faith in the blood of Christ is, therefore, indispensibly necessary to justification. Christ is not the end of the law for righteousness to unbelievers, or to them that have not faith; but he 'is the end of the law for righteouness, to every one that believeth.'" pp. 226, 227.

Besides, pardon would do the unbeliever no good. Admit him to heaven and he could not be happy there, so long as he remains an unbeliever, and unreconciled to the Divine character and government. But, if this view of the subject is correct, it overthrows at once a leading argument in support of the doctrine of universal salvation. Though Christ's atonement is sufficient for the salvation of all men, it is yet of no avail for them that do not *believe* in his atonement. Hence, if the doctrine of universal salvation is argued from the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, the doctrine of universal *sanctification* and *faith* must also be maintained, or the argument is utterly inconclusive. But the fulness of the atonement furnishes no evidence of universal sanctification. Nor do we find this evidence, in any part of the bible. We, therefore, learn the utter fallacy of the hope of salvation, without faith in Christ, notwithstanding the complete fulness of his atonement.

We now come to the "Conclusion" of Mr. B's Essay, in which he takes notice of several opinions, respecting the atonement, which, if his views are correct, are obviously erroneous. But, passing over these, we shall attend briefly to some of those inferences, which result from what he has said. One is, "that the atonement is, in a strict and proper sense, for all mankind."—Christ tasted death for every man; for the non-elect, as much as for the elect. Indeed, election has no more to do with the atonement, than with creation, resurrection, or the general judgement. From the necessity and nature of the atonement, it must obviously be universal. It was necessary to remove obstacles, which opposed the pardon of sinners.—And it has been shown, not only what these were, but that they were removed by the sufferings of Christ. So that nothing now opposes the pardon of any sinner whatever, of the human race, who *believes* in the atonement, or complies with the terms, on which salvation is offered.—But neither the sinner's compliance, nor his non-compliance, can, in any degree, affect the nature or the extent of the atonement. Nor does the extent of the atonement confer an obligation on Jehovah to save all men, or even any man. He remains at full liberty to act in this momentuous concern, as the greatest general good may, in his wisdom, require.

Another important inference is, that the nature of the atonement does not decide the question, whether the greatest good *requires* the salvation of a great, or a small number. For, if God had designed the salvation of only a small number, the same atonement was necessary, to make their pardon consistent, which the salvation of all men would require. In fact, this atonement was necessary, that God might consistently *offer* pardon to sinners: because, if he had designed to leave them wholly to their own choice about accepting it, still, he could not consistently make the *offer*, on any terms, except those, on which it would be consistent to pardon those who accepted. For, notwithstanding all the atonement has done, the *unbelief* of sinners must be removed, or they cannot be saved. But the atonement does not remove this: nor is its nature such, as requires God to remove it. Indeed, there is no evidence, that in *all* cases, it ever will be removed. The mere goodness of God does not prove that none will be left in unbelief and misery, in a future world. There are some, who evidently remain in unbelief, through the present life. And if this is consistent with divine goodness, there is no evidence, that their future state also, may not be sinful and miserable. For this *may* subserve the divine glory in a future world as well as in the present world If however, God should give faith to all, he might save them, on the ground of atonement, and yet promote his glory and the good of the universe, as extensively as would have been done, by executing the law.

But it does not hence follow, that God *will* give all men faith, nor, that by so doing, he would promote his glory and the general good, in the *highest degree*. He might do this, in as great a degree, as could have been done, by executing the law: but the execution of the law could not have promoted his glory and the good of the universe in the *highest degree*. For, if it could, the law would have been executed. Indeed, neither the execution of the law, nor the atonement of Christ, *in itself considered*, is capable of promoting the *highest* glory of God, or the *best* interest of his kingdom. If one could, for the same reason the other must. But here a question arises, which, notwithstanding the length of this article, we are disposed to answer, in the author's own words. For we think it worthy of serious attention.

"It may be asked, then, why should infinite wisdom choose the method of atonement, rather than the execution of the law? The answer is, the atonement, though it does not of itself promote any object, which might not have been promoted by the execution of the law, yet it opens a way, in which God can introduce *other measures*, and accomplish *other purposes*, which could not have been introduced and accomplished, in case the law had been executed; and these other measures and purposes promote his glory and the interest of his kingdom in the *highest degree*. If the penalty of the law had been executed upon all transgressors, God never could have displayed his *justice* and *mercy* to the degree, in which they now appear. The atonement, however, opens the way, in which God makes this display, in the highest perfection.

"It is by means of atonement, that God has opportunity of displaying his justice in the highest degree. If the penalty of the law had been executed on all transgressors, it is true the justice of God would have appeared in some degree. It would have appeared in as great degree as that state of things would have required. But, it would not have appeared to that degree, which the present state of things, under the gospel, requires. For, in order that the glory of divine justice may fully appear, it is neccessary that the evil nature of sin should fully appear. But this never could have appeared to the extent, that it now does, if atonement had not been made.

"It could not have been seen, that sin was so exceedingly malignant, and mankind so exceedingly full of it, as to be ready to reject a Savior and his salvation, when freely offered. If any one, except the Supreme Being himself, had informed angels, that mankind had become so exceedingly depraved, that even if a Savior should be provided, and salvation should be freely offered, on the most reasonable condition, they would all make light of it, and ungratefully reject the offer, it is probable angels would have doubted whether such wickedness were possible.—

If mankind, antecedently to the revelation of God's purposes of mercy, had been so informed, probably, they too, would have rejected the idea, and with indignation. All this, however, is true, and must be seen, before the justice of God, in his opposition to sin, can fully appear. But this is what never could have been seen, if the penalty of the law, without atonement, had been inflicted.—Neither could it have been seen, if, when atonement was made, God had given faith to every sinner. Because, in that case, it never could have appeared, that the wickedness of mankind was so great, that if left to their own choice, they would forever reject a bleeding Savior. Yet all this must appear, in order that the justice of God, in his opposition to this wickedness, may fully be seen. And, if the nature of sin is really so bad, that a sinner, left to himself, will continue his opposition to divine grace, during eternity, then this must be manifested, in order that the justice of God, in punishing such wickedness, may *fully appear*.

" *Divine grace*, also, must forever appear great, in proportion to the greatness of the wickedness that is pardoned. If, then, God would display the full extent of the riches of his grace, to the view of intelligent beings, he must so order his providence respecting sinners, as to make a clear manifestation of the evil nature of sin, even though it should be at the expense of leaving some to their own perverse and wicked choice, to be forever *living examples*, of what all sinners must have been, had not divine grace plucked them as brands from the burning.

" Thus it is evident, that the glory of God may require that the extent of his justice, and the riches of grace, be forever manifested by leaving some sinners to their own chosen way, in perpetual unbelief; that he may, as saith the apostle, " show his wrath and make his power known on vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction." pp. 259—264.

He also remarks, that holy beings may be constantly benefitted by such a display: and, indeed, will be deeply interested in beholding the depth of sin, and the measure of punishment, from which they have been saved. And he adds,

" What, then, if the sufferings of Christ do answer all the valuable purposes, which the execution of the law would have answered, provided no atonement had been made? Does this prove that the execution of the law can answer no valuable purpose *now*, when, in fact, the guilt of sinners is actually increased to an incomparable degree, by their sinning against the atonement ?" p. 266.

This, surely, is a solemn subject. But it is evidently in accordance with the truth. From what God has revealed of himself and his purposes, we are confident he *will promote* his own glory, and the best interest of his kingdom, in the highest degree · and that he has adopted the *best method* to accomplish this object. And since Christ has declared, the wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous ininto life eternal," there is no reason to doubt, that unbelievers in Christ *ought* to be, and *will* be punished according to the demerit of their sins, though a full atonement has been made. For it has been shown, that the extent of the atonement has nothing to do with the number, who are actually saved; because its design was to remove obstacles, which *opposed* their pardon and salvation. This number was fixed, in the gracious purpose of God, by a supreme regard to his own glory, and the best interest of his kingdom.—And, from the very nature and design of the atonement, it is evident that the punishment of every unbeliever is just and necessary, though a full atonement has been made.

Accordingly, in his "Appendix," Mr. B. states, that if his view of the atonement is correct, it sets aside one principal argument in support of universal salvation. Of this, we have already taken a brief notice; and we still think it was effectually overthrown. The author then remarks, "I knew of but two sources from which evidence, [of this doctrine] can be derived, viz.—the analogy of nature, and the doctrines of revelation." These, he proceeds to examine. And by a candid and faithful examination of each one, separately, he shows clearly, that neither of them furnishes the least evidence in support of that doctrine. If we are not deceived, its advocates will find, on a careful examination of this appendix, that even these sources of evidence, are completely destroyed; that both the analogy of nature, and the doctrines of revelation, instead of supporting, are in direct opposition to their favorite doctrine. But, should any one, then ask him, *in what sense*, Christ can be the Savior of the world; his answer is,

"In the same sense that a physician may be said to be the physician of a whole town, when there is no other one, and this one is abundantly able to do all the business, if the people would apply to him; while, at the same time, one half of the sick have no faith in him, and will not apply to him, and actually die for want of his help."—He then concludes—

"And now, reader, let me tell you, that Jesus Christ is your Savior; but if you do not believe in him, and make application to him for pardon, you must die in your sins, and perish forever. On the authority of his word, I assure you, 'He that believeth not, shall be damned.'" p. 294.

We have time to say but little, respecting the Essay itself, or the manner of its execution. That *every* sentiment of the author in this work, is perfectly correct, we would not assume the responsibility of affirming. Yet, as a whole, we readily state, that in our opinion, the view here given of the atonement, is according to the tenor of scripture, and therefore correct. In our examination, we found nothing, which appeared so erroneous, as to demand critical animadversion; nor so dangerous, as to merit an expression of disapprobation. For this reason, we have not detained our readers with critical remarks, on Mr. B's sentiments. And we have only to request those, who may take an interest in the work, and have not seen it, to examine for themselves. If they do not perfectly accord with the author, in their views of the atonement, still, they will find a specimen of close thought, and of connected, powerful argument. We think they will find the scheme consistent with itself.—Probably, if they have not thoroughly examined the subject, they will find something new. And should they find it difficult to disprove the correctness of the scheme, or to invalidate the arguments, in support of it, we shall not think it strange or unaccountable.

The arrangement of its parts is judicious. The subject for discussion is clearly stated. The necessity of an atonement is fairly shown. Its nature, design, and extent, are made obvious and intelligible; while its connection with other doctrines of the bible is duly regarded. In general, a due attention is paid to each of the several parts of the work.—We noticed a few things, however, which had the appearance of repetition, and were at first under the impression, that on some parts the author had dwelt too long.—But, on reflecting that the work contains some things, which to us were new, on an important, difficult subject; and especially, that it was professedly designed for common readers, who may need to have a more full exhibition of truth before them, we were satisfied, that all this might be useful. As an entire work, however, it is obviously condensed; and for the magnitude, and matter of its contents, very limited.

His style, as will appear from the extracts, is plain and natural. It is what may be expected from an author, deeply engaged in investigating a difficult subject, and anxious to make his readers fully understand him. He takes no pains to round his periods; he makes no efforts to amuse his readers with sound instead of sense. We saw no instance, in which sense was sacrificed, or perspicuity impaired, for the sake of ornament. Yet the style is neither vulgar nor vapid; nor is it without specimens of richness and grandeur. Its main features, however, are strength and perspicuity.

We only add, that although it embraces a controverted subject, the work before us is written with a commendable spirit. It breathes no calumny, nor personal invective; it makes no attack on the character of other men; and utters no proscription of an opponent. On the contrary, it is well fitted to advance the cause of truth in our guilty world. A candid perusal of it, we think, will impart consolation to the people of God, and may serve to convince the impenitent, that, unless they *believe* in Christ, his atonement will be the means of their greater guilt, and their deeper condemnation.

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THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—BY BUNYANUS.

CHAPTER I.

In journeying through the wilderness of this world, it happened that I fell in company with a man of singular parts, whose name was Mr. *Sagacity*. And having far to travel in the same road, I enjoyed the pleasure of his society, and the benefit of his conversation, for many days. Knowing that he was the same person who had formerly given a relation of the adventures of certain pilgrims, in their progress from the city of Destruction to the Celestial Country I embraced the opportunity of inquiring further respecting them, and was much delighted with hearing the old gentleman relate again the various perils the pilgrims encountered, for the love they bore to the Prince Immanuel, the wonderful deliverances which they had experienced by the strength of his arm and the happy termination of their journey. When the good man dwelt on the joys of the state in which they now are, and spoke of those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, I felt my heart burn with strong desire to go also on pilgrimage, to be a follower of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises, that I too might share in the glories of the New Jerusalem, and might sit down with the general assembly of pilgrims at the marriage supper of the Prince Immanuel.

So strongly had these things taken possession of my mind, that when I laid me down to sleep at the inn, I had no sooner closed my eyes, than my imagination returned to the pilgrims and their adventures. Methought I stood upon an eminence, which commanded an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, and allowed me to extend my view far to the east. On my right in the plain below, was the city of Destruction, with the towns of Stupidity, Sensuality and Carnal Security, and the extensive regions of the province of Darkland. To the south was Mount Sinai, and just beyond it the town of Formality, the village of Morality, and the other towns and villages of Pharisee land. Just before me was the wicket gate, which stood at the head of the narrow way; and from his gate, stretching due east, far as the eye could reach, lay the road to the Celestial City.

On directing my attention to the valley below me, I perceived that the suburbs of the city of Destruction were extended close up to the wicket gate; and that this part of the city, as well as every other was exceedingly populous. Fixing my eyes upon the inhabitants, I observed that all was bustle and confusion among them. All appeared eagerly engaged, and exerting all their powers, in the pursuit of something, but what, I could not at first distinctly perceive. On drawing nearer, and looking more attentively, I could more clearly distinguish what their employments were. Some of them were endeavoring to climb a high hill, called Worldly Honor. The sides of this hill were very steep, and at the same time very slippery, so that few of the climbers ever reached the summit. And those few who did reach the summit, I perceived did not remain there; but presently their heads grew dizzy, and they tumbled headlong, to be seen no more.—Many were the expedients resorted to, in order to mount up this dangerous hill. Some mounted upon the shoulders of others, that they might reach a place where there was foot hold. And all seemed willing at first to take others upon their shoulders, with the expectation that when they were up, they would assist them in turn.—But these expectations were seldom realized; for those who were up seemed so intent upon mounting higher, as not to regard those below any further than they needed their help. Many who had reached a considerable elevation were pulled down by others, who were desirous of taking their places. And many who thus pulled others down, fell with them to the bottom. Some having secured the ladder of popular favor, ascended quickly to a great height, when the ladder suddenly gave way, and their bones were broken with the fall.

Others I saw digging with vast labor in a mine called Worldy Gain, and burthening themselves with great quantities of the earth they brought thence. Many of those who descended into the mine I observed never came out again; but the earth often fell in upon them and buried them alive. Such occurrences however did not seem in the least to damp the ardor of the survivors, who continued digging with the same eagerness, though at the imminent hazard of their lives. The earth which was brought from the mine appeared to occasion many quarrels among those who possessed it. And when they carried it home, I saw that they were not able to sleep for fear that others should set upon them and take it away. Children often wished their parents dead, that they might get possession of what was in their hands; and as soon as their parents were out of the way, quarrelled among themselves about the division. And I saw, moreover, that several very ill favored and dreadful shapes, called Fraud, and Lying and Perjury, and Murder, were continually walking about amongst the diggers, taking the earth from some and giving it to others. Those who received it from them seemed to exult for a few moments, in the possession; but soon another monster called Remorse, with vipery hair and snaky whip, pursued them wherever they went.

Another part of the inhabitants I saw employing themselves very differently still. These were chiefly of the younger sort. In the midst of the city, ran several deep, turbid, sluggish streams, called the streams of Sensual Pleasure, the waters of which were mingled with vast quantities of mire, and filth, which were drained off from the streets and common sewers of the city, and continually sent forth the most offensive and pestilential exhalations. These streams, flowing together in the heart of the city, formed a vast whirlpool, called the Vortex of Dissipation, in which multitudes were continually swallowed up, and carried into the Dead Sea. To these foul streams vast crowds of both sexes were continually resorting, and with the greatest seeming eagerness were drinking down the fœtid waters, with an insatiable thirst. Numbers were sailing down these streams to the Vortex of Dissipation, and many boys were bathing in them, and sporting in the mire and filth.

When I had seen the inhabitants of the city thus employed, I said to myself these people cannot be in the enjoyment of right reason, they are certainly beside themselves. And what strengthened me in this persuasion was, that I saw no one among them who was at all satisfied with his present condition; but the mind of every one appeared like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. And notwithstanding that they found so little satisfaction in their pursuits, they still returned to them with as much eagerness as ever. And I saw, moreover, that every one had a heavy burden on his back like that which the pilgrim Christian had before he became a pilgrim; and that although these burdens seemed to me to be sufficiently heavy to sink them down to Tophet, yet none of them seemed to be sensible that he had any burden at all. And besides this, I perceived underneath the whole city a vast pit filled with combustible materials and burning with great fierceness, which had gradually worn away the ground on which the city stood, so that in many places it was a mere shell, and often tumbled under them, as if it were ready to crumble in pieces and plunge the whole city into the burning abyss below. And notwithstanding all this, they appeared to be as unconcerned, and as eagerly engaged in their various employments as if there were no danger to be apprehended.

While I looked at them, and wondered at their conduct in their present circumstances, I observed one near me whose name was Revelation, to whom I addressed myself, and inquired if he could explain these things.

Then said he to me, this whole country was once under the dominion of the celestial king, who governed it with the greatest equity and mildness, and imposed no restraints upon the inhabitants, but such as were necessary for their own and the general good. The black tyrant, however, the implacable enemy of their king, found means to persuade them that the wholesome restraints they were under, were intolerable, and too grievous to be submitted to; and that if they would revolt from their lawful prince, and put themselves under his control, they should be exalted to great dignity, and enjoy unbounded liberty. They accordingly revolted from their rightful king, and became the subjects of the black tyrant.

But he has greatly deceived them, said I. He has so, replied Mr. Revelation; for instead of being highly exalted, and becoming as gods, which he promised them, they have debased themselves to the lowest depth of degradation, and have become the vilest of creatures. And instead of enjoying greater liberty, they are now the veriest slaves in the universe.

They do not appear to be in the enjoyment of right reason, said I.

Rev. They are not. "Their hearts are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live." The black tyrant has blinded the eyes of their understanding. And so complete is his influence over them, that they do not perceive their bondage, nor the heavy burthens they have upon their backs.

They are greatly to be pitied, said I.

Rev. They are indeed; but they are more to be blamed.

How is that? said I. Do we not think a man excusable for what he does under the influence of lunacy, when he is not in the enjoyment of right reason?

Rev. We do so, when a man is under the influence of *natural* blindness, madness or lunacy.—But the madness of these people is of a peculiar nature. It is not *natural* but *moral*. They are entirely *voluntary* in their madness. The black tyrant could never have brought them under his power, without their consent. He can have no further influence upon them now, than they please to give him; and he cannot keep them in subjection a moment longer than they are his willing slaves.

But, have they no information, said I, of the danger to which they are exposed by remaining in the city?

Rev. They have the best information. I am continually employed in pointing out to them this danger, and the way to escape it, through yonder gate.—I am always proclaiming that the wrath of the king is revealed from his throne against them; and pointing out to them the dangerous pit of fire and brimstone, over which they hang, and which is very soon to swallow up their whole city. But I am very little regarded. Some say that I am an impostor, and they will not listen to me. Others say, my language is so mysterious, they cannot understand me if they try, and they will not try. Others say, I tell some truth and some lies, and they cannot tell what to depend upon. Others admit that all I say is true, in some sense or other; but they will not believe I mean as I say. Others say, they are too much employed just now, they have no time to listen to me; and bid me call again at a more convenient season.

There is one, named Conscience, who seconds my designs as far as he can. He never contradicts the opinions of those he addresses, but often crosses their inclinations. He bids them attend to my instructions, and always act according to their best judgment of what is right. He often follows them into their secret retirements and expostulates with them upon the folly and wickedness of their conduct; and sometimes he breaks in upon them in the midst of their carousals, and terrifies them with the tidings of what is coming upon them. But, they are far from being pleased with his admonitions; and if they cannot contrive to silence him, they usually drown his voice in the noise and bustle which they raise. Evangelist also often goes and preaches to them, and warns them to flee from the wrath to come. And Goodwill, at the gate, stands with the doors wide open, night and day, with his hands stretched out towards them, saying, in the most affectionate manner, "come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Upon hearing these words, I cast my eyes towards the gate, and saw a crowd of people collecting near it, round a venerable old man, whom I presently knew to be Evangelist. I therefore descended the hill and mingled with the crowd, that I might hear him preach. After prayer, he opened a book which he held in his hand, and read the following words; "Now then we are ambassadors for Immanuel as though the king did beseech you by us, we pray you in Immanuel's stead, be ye reconciled to the king."—After pointing out the nature of the controversy between the king and his rebellious subjects, and showing the unreasonableness and wickedness of their conduct, and the propriety of their submitting themselves unconditionally to the king, he pointed out to them, in the most affecting manner, what the Prince Immanuel had done to open the door of reconciliation; and urged them, by his dying groans and bitter agonies, to renounce their rebellion, and return to their allegiance. At the same time, he warned those who should refuse to submit, of the danger to which they were exposed from the dreadful pit, over which they were suspended, and the wrath of the king which was revealed against them. I was myself too much interested in the subject to notice the manner in which it affected the hearers while it was delivered; but when the preacher had dismissed the assembly, I observed a number of persons collected in a group, making their remarks upon what they had heard.

I am weary, said Mr. Curiosity with hearing the same old tale, every time he preaches, he never gives us any thing that is new.

I am displeased, said Mr. Obstinate, that he always insists upon our giving up our side of the controversy, and never speaks of the king's yielding a little. For my part, I am willing to be on good terms with the king, provided he will give up his claims, and be reconciled to us.

For my part, said Mr. Pride, I cannot bear to hear him always talking of submission. And what is worse than all, he would have us submit unconditionally. He would have us throw ourselves into the hand of the king, to be disposed of at his sovereign pleasure. Perhaps he would banish or imprison the half of us. I am determined never to be reconciled to the king, unless he will previously stipulate never to bring me to trial, but to raise me to a throne; and then I shall be willing to submit, if he calls that submission.

The greatest fault I find, said Mr Self-Complacent, is that he gives such an odious character to those who are in rebellion against the king. He will not allow that there is any moral goodness in them, but insists that they are wholly corrupt, and that every imagination of the thoughts of their heart is only evil continually. I consider this as a libel upon the whole of us.

I am displeased, said Mr. Secure, that he preaches so much terror. For my part, I have no idea of being frightened into submission to the king. I do not believe there is any such pit of fire and brimstone, as he speaks of, beneath our city, ready to swallow us up. I have a better opinion of the king, than to suppose that he will punish the creatures which he has made, for any crimes which it is in their power to commit.

DEATH OF MR. NICHOLS, ONE OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARIES, STATIONED AT BOMBAY.

Late in the autumn Mr. Nichols commenced a tour in the southern Konkan, for the purpose of visiting, and to a certain extent newly organizing, the schools which had been established there. He expected to be absent a month. But before arriving at Rawadunda, aboat 16 miles below Bombay, he was taken ill with a fever, and reached that place with difficulty. Immediately on his arrival, the teacher of the school at Rawadunda furnished him with a bed and with every attention in his power. Hearing of his illness, Mr. Garrett proceeded to his assistance, and sending back word that he grew worse, Mr. Frost accompained Mrs. Nichol's, in a covered boat, to the place of his sickness, for the purpose of bringing him to Bombay, whither they conveyed him on the 9th of December, ten days after the commencement of his sickness. He was speechless, and much of the time insensible, and, about the middle of the following night, fell asleep and rested from his labors.

The funeral services were attended the next day in the chapel, to which many of the natives resorted, and were solemnly addressed by the Rev. Mr. Fyvie of Surat, who happened then to be at Bombay. The Rev. Messrs. Davis, Fyvie and Kenney visited Mr. Nichols repeatedly after his arrival at Bombay, and, with the Rev. Mr. Carr and the American Missionaries, accompanied his remains to the grave.

Miss. Her.

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MEMOIR OF THE

REV. JOSEPHUS WHEATON

It is now several months since the lamented death of the Rev. Josephus Wheaton of Holliston.—A number of short notices of him, has, in the interval, been given to the public. If the present memoir comes too late for the purposes of sympathy; it may come in a more proper season for extended and practical reflections.

Josephus Wheaton, son of Joseph Wheaton, Esq. was born at Rehoboth, Mass. on the 16th of March 1788. It will be interesting to his acquaintance, and may be useful to those of tender years, to know, that the same amiable disposition which endeared him to his friends in riper years, was manifested by him when a child. His peaceable, condescending and kind behaviour toward his brother and sisters made him their delight. He was obedient to his parents; and, as his father relates of him, "never needed to be spoken to a second time." In this respect, he early imitated the example of his Savior, respecting whom, little is written of his first years to gratify the learned;—yet it is particularly recorded that he was subject to his parents.—While a child, Josephus was sober minded. And although not religious; yet he seems to have been free from the vices and follies incident to that period of life. This was probably owing to religious instruction, seasonably and faithfully imparted; which before it was the means of his conversion operated as a strong moral restraint.

Until about the age of seventeen, his opportunities of education were confined within the limits of our common winter schools. At this time, the native energy of his character and his thirst for knowledge, began to open his way to the means of obtaining a more finished education. By his own ingenuity and perseverance, he obtained a trade, the avails of which were destined by Providence, to prepare him for his future usefulness in a profession, where it may be said of him, that *his feet were shod* with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

He entered Brown University, a year in advance, in 1809. Here he prosecuted his studies with ardour, diligence and success. The regularity of his conduct won the esteem both of the officers and students of the University. He was graduated in Sept. 1812, one of the best scholars of his class; among whom was Kingsbury, the able and devoted missionary to the Indians, the room-mate and endeared friend of the subject of this memoir. There they emulated each other's industry and attainments; they united in the morning and evening sacrifice, " took sweet counsel together and walked to the house of God in company." Wheaton is removed from his earthly labours; Kingsbury stays to tread the wilderness, and lead the wandering Indian to the blessings of civilization and christianity. It will be inferred from this that Mr. Wheaton was religious while at College. He entertained a hope of reconciliation to God, before his entrance into College; but whether the hope was well or ill founded, he with that self-distrust, which was always peculiar to him, abandoned it. Near the close of his collegiate course, his mind was refreshed with peace in believing; and if this was not the time of his conversion, it was evidently of deepened seriousness, and more unreserved dedication of himself to God. He then united himself, by solemn covenant, with the visible church.

In respect to the choice of a profession, he formed different designs and expectations at different periods of his preparatory and collegiate education. His first view was to the law, and for a considerable time, his habits of mind were forming under the influence of that expectation. But for what particular reason, it is not understood, he became afterwards inclined to the profession of medicine, and he attended the various lectures of that department, under the expectation, that he was preparing for the business of his life. When, however, his christian hope permitted him to turn his attention to the ministry, he abandoned all other prospects of life, and determined to consecrate all his powers and acquisitions to the work of preaching the gospel.—His changes of purpose will not be imputed, by those who knew him, to any instability of character. They have been mentioned, under the conviction, that they were, in this case, and have been in others, *providential*, and well calculated to enlarge the sphere of ministerial usefulness.

After leaving the University, Mr. Wheaton was engaged as Preceptor in George Street Academy, in Providence; but was soon invited to a tutorship in the University. Here, as might have been expected, he discharged with eminent ability and faithfulness, the duties of an office, for which he was admirably fitted; and he had the happiness, at the same time, to benefit and please the students under his tuition and government. He was a tutor more than two years; during which time, he was not merely gratifying his high relish for classical learning; but was devoting what time his office would allow to the study of divinity.

Previously to his resigning his office in the College, he was licensed to preach; and was invited to supply the desk at Holliston, the town in which he was afterwards ordained and settled.—His ordination was on the 6th of Dec. 1815. He now entered zealously into the duties of the ministry; and performed those duties with great credit to himself, and it is believed, with lasting advantage to his people.

The labors of a christian minister, whose main concern is to feed the church over which he is made an overseer, are not of a kind, to afford interest by a particular detail. Rev. Mr. Wheaton laboured faithfully to promote what he considered the best interests of his people. He cared for souls as one that must give an account. He was anxious for the enlargement of his church, and very anxious, that all who named the name of Christ should depart from iniquity. He used to lament that no special revival of religion was experienced among his people; and would express fears that it was owing to his unfaithfulness. Others however may justly say of him, what his characteristic humility did not suffer him to say of himself. He, in truth, sought fervently the welfare of Zion and the good of souls. But he feared being deceived himself as to the foundation of his religious hopes; and he feared lest others should be deceived. This made him a close and distinguishing preacher; by which I mean, that he incessantly laboured, in his preaching, not only to make persons religious; but to make them trust in nothing, but those pure and disinterested affections, in which he conceived that true religion consisted.

In his intercourse with his people, his wisdom was evangelical; first pure then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated. His conciliating deportment, amiable temper, and dignified, yet unaffected manners won the affections of those who were not always pleased with his theological sentiments.—Among that highly respectable people, there had been unhappy divisions previously to Mr. Wheaton's coming among them. The unanimity which attended his call to be their pastor, and teacher, was under such circumstances considered remarkable; and Mr. Wheaton continued to hold and to increase their respect and affection.

A spirit of improvement, in general, he seemed desirous of promoting. Hence his solicitude for the prosperity of schools and his encouragement of every laudable undertaking among his people.

But he was all the time a student as well as a pastor. What time the more active duties of his office would permit, he was with his book and his pen. His dear companion who bewails his death, bears witness to his diligence; and observe that scarcely a day past, without hearing from him some lamentation, that he had not better improved his time. He usually read with system; and embraced in that system nothing which he did not deem subordinate and conducive to his usefulness as a servant of Christ. His desire for learning was indulged rather from motives of duty, than of variety. He was, indeed, made to be not only a minister but a literary man, such was the character of the talents with which God had endowed him; such had been the effect of the circumstances into which divine Providence had cast him. But his object was learning sanctified and devoted to increase the glory of God and the good of men, he meant to make the wisdom of the Egyptians subservient to the interest of the people of God.

He excelled in an intimate acquaintance with the classics. His literary character, and eminent talents as an instructor of youth, made his house a favorite resort of young men fitting for College, or perfecting their education. Among the plans which quickened his industry, was a book which he was well qualified to compose on the subject of school education; the topicks and chapters of which remain as a memento of his useful designs.

He was extensively acquainted with the authors who have written on mental philosophy and moral science. He had so great a taste for these subjects, and had read so extensively in reference to them, that he sometimes ventured to contemplate a publication, not intended as an original work, but which should embody the best views on these important subjects.

As a *preacher* Mr. Wheaton was what he principally aimed to be, *instructive*. He considered truth to be the ordinary instrument of sanctifying and saving men; and that the chief object of a preacher should be, to inculcate truth, in humble dependance on a higher power to give it a saving energy.

Yet he was also an animated and animating preacher. His whole soul appeared in his work; and his pulpit exertions were even too fatiguing for an ordinary constitution to support.

He was always instructive and animated, and sometimes powerful. To be eloquent, was not his object, yet he was occasionally eloquent to a very high degree.—That part of his discourse on the equality of mankind, which relates to *slavery* shews no less the pen of a master than the heart of a christian philanthropist; and needs only the authority of a *name* to spread it in other climes and countries. But it was his maxim, that the world generally do justice to merit, and that every man finds his proper place and standing.—He was unobtrusive on the world for fame, and no fortunate circumstances brought his merits extensively before the public.

His *style* will bear just encomium. Language in the most extensive use of the word, was a subject with which Mr. Wheaton was familiar. Few, even among the learned had so quick and clear a perception of the different shades of meaning, of different words, or were able to choose words with such uniform propriety. He well understood what Melmoth calls the "numerous composition" and had an ear for a harmonious period. In a word, his style was worthy of the man who wrote, and, of the important subjects on which it was employed. He seemed to think with Addison that good thoughts ought to be well dressed. He had, also the authority of a wiser man; who "*because* he was wise, sought to find out acceptable words," and considered "words fitly spoken to be like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

But it may, however, be acknowledged, without depreciating his attainments or usefulness, that his intimacy with learning, led him unconsciously at times to a literary phraseology, which though it was intelligible, yet did not come home so well to the minds of men—as if he had always spoken in a style more akin to their modes of conception. His intention was, to be perspicuous, and he was generally successful.

As it respects the delivery of his discourses, it was natural, and the animation of which we have already spoken, united with the rich materials of his sermons, made him a highly acceptable speaker. Yet "the start theatric," &c. he had never practiced. And perhaps it may be said of him as of most preachers in this part of our country; that he did not pay proportionate attention to the delivery of his compositions. Since I have assumed to act the part of the critic I will take the freedom to observe what perhaps was less noticed by his ordinary hearers; that he spoke too fast. His own quick apprehension and warm temperament led him to a delivery of his discourses, which was too rapid to permit every auditor fully to apprehend, all the thoughts with which his sermons abounded.—this defect, his benevolence, would undoubtedly dispose him to permit to be mentioned, if it might guard others against a fault, which is not unfrequent. It is certainly matter of regret, that after a preacher has with anxious and laborious study, collected valuable materials for his discourse, he should deliver his thoughts so rapidly, that if much is understood, still much must be lost by the hearer. This defect however has been more remarkable in thousands of others, than in Mr. Wheaton; and is the more to be regretted in this intance, as it made his preaching so much more wearing to his constition and may have been somewhat instrumental in cutting short his valuable life.

His faithful preparations for the pulpit ought not to be left unnoticed. He carried beaten oil into the sanctuary, and seemed unwilling to offer to God an offering of that which cost him nothing. Few ministers of his age, could, perhaps shew such proofs of their care and industry, by the number and condition of their manuscripts.

He extemporised occasionally; and although he usually did this when time permitted him only a hasty preparation; yet the quickness of his conceptions, the ardor of his feelings, and his well furnished and well disciplined mind, made his performances on such occasions very creditable to his talents and useful to his hearers. There appeared indeed on these occasions *more* nature and power in his delivery and unusually striking illustrations and expressions. Had he purposed to have become an extemporaneous preacher, and thus have devoted as much time to his extemporary, as to his written discourses, he might have increased his usefulness, by adding this to his other attainments.

It was delightful to listen to, and join in his prayers. Not only was there extensive compass, and happy pertinence of thought, and and great ease and fluency of expression; but a charming sincerity and fervor of devotion, which animated christians, reproved the lukewarm, and denoted him to be a man of prayer in private as well as in public.

His *piety* was ardent; and humility was well known by his acquaintance to be a distinguishing feature of it. His trials in respect to his own piety, though not without example, were peculiarly severe and at times caused painful sensations in his friends who had so much confidence, that he possessed religion, and wished that he might go on his way rejoicing.—But his sun was not always overcast; he hoped in God; resigned himself with confidence to his disposal; and often had joy and peace in believing. Mr. Wheaton was a valuable and interesting *friend*; as well as an affectionate and kind husband and parent.—While his family and relatives, his church and people call justly for the tenderest sympathies, his brethren in the ministry with whom he was most intimately associated, mourn that they must see his face no more. They always received from him a cordial welcome, and felt it a great privilege to enjoy his conversation and counsel. They saw in him a mind of the first order, both for the acquisition and the retention of knowledge; they witnessed his constant application and rapid growth in knowledge and grace and predicted his eminence and increased usefulness to the church and the world. He still lives in their affections. May the example of his diligence and piety animate them to increase in diligence; and more entire devotion to the cause of the Redeemer.—His health was declining for nearly three years before his death. His disease was obstinate and peculiar; not only causing a frequent alternation of hope and fear in him, but in his friends also. It appeared peculiarly trying to be the subject of a disease, of so doubtful a nature and issue. The variation of the prospect presented to him, now of life and a protraction of his duties and labors, now of death and an end of all earthly pursuits—caused the trial to be in his case, constantly repeated; and it seemed as if divine Providence intended to try his resignation by the severest test, and make him an example to others of patience and submission. But let pious but humble christians know that this man of God, was not in his last sickness, at all times delivered from every fear, but, as might have been expected of him, he was always patient, usually serene, and sometimes even joyful. As those will witness who were present, when the communion, was administered to him at his house. Then it seemed as if unusual strength was given him; so that he sung through an hymn of some length, and greatly enjoyed the divine ordinance. Though shut out from the natural light, as he was, entirely, for months during the last of his sickness; the "heavenly light at times shown inward," an antepast as we trust to an unclouded and perennial day.

This servant of the Lord expired Feb. 4th 1825 having not yet completed his 37th year.

He was interred on the 10th, and an appropriate discourse, containing a concise but just and affectionate notice of his character, was delivered by Rev. Mr. Ide of Medway from the 77th Psalm 19th verse. "Thy way is in the sea, thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

SERMON No. XII.

MARK, IX. 40.—*For he that is not against us, is on our part.*

It is very easy to distinguish the rich from the poor, the learned from the unlearned, the moral from the immoral; but it is not so easy to distinguish the gracious from the graceless. This most important of all distinctions is the most difficult to ascertain. The disciples of Christ were unable to determine, who were his real friends, in distinction from his real enemies. They often formed wrong opinions concerning the religious characters of men. They took one of their own number to be a cordial friend to Christ, who afterwards turned out to be his mortal enemy; and they took another man to be his enemy, whom he declared to be his friend.—This they were constrained to acknowledge. Christ having illustrated the character of a true disciple, they acquaint him of their opinion of a certain man, whom they found casting out devils.—"And John answered him saying, Master; we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me. *For he that is not against us, is on our part.*—"As if he had said, he that is not unfriendly to me is friendly; and he that is friendly to me in the least degree, is a real friend or one of my true disciples: because there is no medium between love and hatred, grace and sin." Hence the spirit of the text warrants us to say,

That the least degree of grace constitutes a real saint. I shall show,

I. What is meant by grace.

II. That the least degree of it constitutes a real saint. And,

III. Why it does this.

I. Let us consider what is to be understood by grace.

By this word we commonly mean to express some holy exercise of heart; and when we say any person is in the exercise of grace, we mean that he is in the exercise of some holy affection, which is peculiar to a good man. By grace in God, we mean that exercise of holiness or benevolence, which is called compassion or forgiveness to the guilty. But by grace in men, we mean every exercise of pure benevolence or holy love.—The scripture more frequently speaks of the gracious exercises of God towards men, than their exercises of grace towards him and one another. But the term grace is very often used to signify the holy exercises of the renewed heart. In this sense Paul uses the word, when he exhorts christians "to sing to the Lord, with grace in their hearts." And when he says, "Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt." In another place he says, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." And again, "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." The apostle Peter also exhorts christians "to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." In all these instances, the word *grace*, is evidently used to denote holy and devout exercises of heart. And from this use of the word in scripture, it has become common and familiar to call holy affections, the exercises of grace. Accordingly when I use the phrase, the least degree of grace, I mean the least or lowest, exercise of holy love or true benevolence, in which all holiness consists. I proceed,

II. To show that the least degree of grace constitutes a real saint. This will appear from various considerations.

1. The least degree of grace is represented as the fruit of the renewing or sanctifying influence

of the Holy Spirit. The least degree of divine love is represented as flowing from this cause. The apostle John says, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God." And the apostle Paul says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." True faith also is said to be the fruit of the Spirit. The apostle John says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." Agreeably to this Paul tells the believers at Corinth, "Ye are risen with him, (that is Christ,) through the faith of the operation of God." And receiving Christ, or what is the same thing believing in him,is represented in the same light in the first chapter of John. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The first and lowest degree of grace is ascribed to the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, by Christ in the third chapter of this gospel. "That which is born of the spirit is spirit." That is, every holy or spiritual affection is the effect of the regenerating influence of the divine spirit. And in perfect consistency with this, we are told, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness." Now if every degree of grace, if every holy and virtuous affection be the fruit of regenerating or sanctifying influences of the spirit of God; then the least degree of grace must constitute a real saint. For every one who is renewed and sanctified, or born of God, is a good man. This is an infallible criterion of a true believer. John says, "We know that whatsoever is born of God sinneth not." And again, "Whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." Or in other words this is the essential difference between saints and sinners; saints are born of God, but sinners are not; saints have some grace, and sinners have none. The least spark of grace, therefore, forms a real saint.

2. Divine promises are made to the least degree of grace, which is another evidence, that the least degree of grace forms the christian character. If we look into the bible, we shall find gracious promises made to all gracious exercises. God declares, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." The apostle John says, "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Christ says, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." And the apostle Paul asserts, "All things shall work to-

gether for good to them that love God." In all these passages, the promise of divine love and favor is made to love, and to love of the lowest degree. Accordingly, the the apostle scruples not to say, " Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." The lowest degree of true, sincere love, entitles any person to all the promises of the gospel. Pardon is promised to repentance throughout the Old and New Testament. God promises to pardon every penitent, contrite, broken-hearted sinner. When the three thousand said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, " Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." And the next day he said to a great many more under similar circumstances, " Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Our Savior said to sinners, " Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And he spake several parables to illustrate this truth, that the least degree of genuine repentance would entitle sinners to pardoning mercy. The parable of the publican was designed to teach us, that whosoever shall say in sincerity, " God be merciful to me a sinner," shall find mercy.—And the parable of the prodigal son was designed to teach the most worthless and ill-deserving sinners, that if they will sincerely say what the prodigal did, they shall be pardoned and accepted.—Yea, " Thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." The promise of salvation is every where and in every form, in the New Testament made to the exercise of faith. Christ said, " him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Christ said, " Whosoever should believe on him, should not come into condemnation, should not die—should not perish; but should have everlasting life." And he gave it in commission to all his apostles and ministers, to preach the gospel to every creature in these words, " He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Thus the lowest degree of love, or repentance, or faith, entitles men to the favor and enjoyment of God. This doctrine Christ more fully and emphatically taught in his sermon on the mount, in which he said, " Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Just before his crucifixion, Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come and drink." And after his ascension to heaven, he commanded it to be written. "The spirit and the bride say, come: let him that heareth say, come: let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." According to these declarations of scripture, the lowest degree of hungering, thirsting, and desiring, entitles any one to pardon and salvation. But we know that all promises are in Christ, yea, and amen. God promises no good to sinners, as such ;, and therefore all to whom the promises of God apply, are christians, believers, or real saints. And since the lowest degree of grace secures the promise of eternal life: this implies that the least degree of grace forms the essential distinction between a saint and a sinner.

3. God promises to reward men for the least action done in a *gracious* manner; which implies that the least degree of grace will place men at the right hand of the Judge, at the last day. This our Savior suggests in connection with the text, and in order to illustrate the truth contained in it. Having said, "he that is not against us, is on our part," he immediately subjoins," "for whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you he shall not lose his reward." Such a small action done in gracious sincerity, or to express love to Christ shall meet a final and eternal reward. This sentiment Christ frequently inculcated. He says in the tenth of Matthew, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward, and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward." And in the twenty fifth chapter, where he describes the process of the great day, he represents the righteous as being rewarded for the smallest expressions of benevolence, even such as they could hardly recollect, "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord when saw we an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink, &c. And the King shall answer, and say unto them. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethern, ye did it unto me." From this representation it appears, that the least action done in a gracious manner, shall be finally and forever rewarded.—But the persons of men must be accepted, before their actions can be accepted, or they must be pardoned, before they are rewarded. All, therefore, whose actions are

rewarded must be real saints.—The consequence is plain and undeniable, that the least degree of grace constitutes the christian character. If a man has the least love to Christ, or the least love to his friends, or does the least gracious act, he is a gracious man, and belongs to the number of Christ's true disciples, and shall be openly acknowledged and rewarded, at the great and last day. It only remains to show.

III. Why the least degree of grace constitutes a real saint.—And here it may be observed,

1. That the least degree of grace implies supreme love to God and the divine Redeemer.—This is more than intimated in the text. "He that is not against us, is on our part." Grace, we have observed, consists in holiness or true benevolence.—True benevolence is universal and disinterested love. And this love gives God and Christ the supreme place in the heart. The least degree of true love or real grace places God on the throne, and rejoices in his absolute sovereignty. Hence Christ in describing true love to himself, represents it as absolutely and necessarily supreme. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." He goes on to say, that his true disciples must love him not only more than the applause of the world, but, more than the friendship of their nearest and dearest connections. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me!" and he carries the idea higher still, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." He advances a step further and says, that men must love him more than their own lives "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." And in another place he says, "He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." When he interrogated Peter respecting the sincerity of his love, he asks, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these." If there can be no true love to any divine person, which is not supreme, then, there can be no true love to God, or Christ, which is not supreme.—And Christ represents it to be really absurd to suppose, that any man can be a true friend and servant to God, without supreme affection to him. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.—Ye cannot serve God and mammon." And the apostle John teaches the same doctrine. "Love not the world, neither the things of world. If any man love the world, the love of the Fa

ther is not in him." It is a plain truth, that the least degree of true love to God implies supreme attachment to him, to his Son, to his Spirit, and to his cause. And such supreme love ought to form a man's character and constitute him a real saint, and distinguish him from every one that has not the love of God in him.

2. The least degree of grace will naturally branch out into every christian affection and moral virtue. The least degree of grace is supreme love to God, and disinterested love to man. The least degree of supreme love to God, will produce repentance, godly sorrow, faith in Christ, unconditional submission to the divine government, humility, meekness, compassion, and a proper regard to the good of men. Love is the fulfilling of the law; the bond of perfection, and the charity, which seeketh not her own.—This holy affection naturally leads those who possess it, to feel and act properly towards every being, creature and object that comes into their view; and so to form a perfect character in miniature.—While pure, holy, disinterested and universal love reigns in the heart, it will dispose every one to feel and act as he ought to feel and act, or as a real saint does feel and act. When the heart of a sinner is changed from sin to holiness, from selfishmess to benevolence, he becomes a new man; old things pass away, and all things become new: He becomes a real saint, instead of a real sinner.—The first and least exercise of grace lays a foundation for every christian grace and virtue.

3. The least degree of grace will produce universal obedience to the divine commands. Grace is love, and that love, which is the fulfilling of the law. The child that has true love to his parents, will obey them; the servant that has true love to his master, will obey him; so whosoever loves God will obey him. Hence says the apostle, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." Those who have the least degree of true love to God, will have respect to all his precepts, and obey them as universally, though not so constantly, as those who are strong in faith. They will perform the most difficult and self-denying duties of the gospel. They will deny themselves—take up their cross—confess Christ before the world; give up their worldly interests and dearest friends; and even sacrifice their lives, to promote the honor and interest of Christ. All this Christ requires of every one of his sincere followers, whether, he has larger, or smaller degrees of grace. He acknowledges none to be his friend, unless he is willing to do whatsoever he commands him. He that is not against Christ, is on his part; and he that is on his part will sincerely desire to do every thing he can, to honor and please him. The least christian

as sincerely desires to obey and please Christ in all things, as the greatest and best disciple he has. Every sincere follower of Christ desires to obey every one of his commands, though he does not constantly obey any one of them. The least degree of grace, therefore, forms the character of a real christian, and prepares him to pay universal obedience to whatever Christ has commanded him. I may add,

4. That the least degree of grace is infallibly connected with persevering and increasing holiness of heart and life. So our Saviour has assured us, in the parable of the sower. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Such is the growing and fruitful nature of divine grace in the heart which Christ further illustrates by saying, "He that received seed into good ground, is he that heareth the word of God and understandeth it; who also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty." He said the same thing in substance to the woman of Samaria. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The reason of this persevering and fruitful nature of grace the apostle gives us in his address to the Philippians. "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ."—This he represents as the fixed purpose of God in his epistle to the Romans, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." According to the divine constitution, there is an infallible connection between the first and lowest degree of grace, and perfect and persevering holiness. It is as certain, that the weakest christian shall persevere, as the strongest, and as certain, that the weakest as well as the strongest, shall become perfectly holy.—Hence there appears good reason, why the least degree of grace should constitute and denominate a real saint, and place him among the friends of God and heirs of heaven.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the least degree of grace constitutes a real saint; then every sinner is totally depraved.—It is universally believed and generally allowed, that sinners are in some measure, and in some respects, depraved. Some suppose,

that their reason, conscience, and all their intellectual faculties are in some measure, though not totally weakened, obscured, or depraved. Some suppose, that their depravity lies in their hearts, which are not perfectly holy, nor perfectly destitute of all moral goodness. But it appears from what has been said, that neither of these opinions is just. Depravity lies in the heart, and not in the understanding; and the heart is not only partially, but totally depraved. This appears very plain from numerous declarations of scripture upon the subject. But all scriptural declarations are capable of being misunderstood, misconstrued, and criticised away. There is no doctrine of the gospel, which has been more opposed of late, than the total depravity of sinners, and none which its learned enemies have employed more ingenuity and criticism, to refute. But though they have said some things plausibly to pervert and misconstrue particular passages of scripture, that, in their plain and true sense, support the doctrine of total depravity; yet they have not presumed to deny or explain away that essential distinction between saints and sinners, which runs through the bible, and which has been clearly and abundantly proved in this discourse; and so long as it remains an acknowledged truth, that the least degree of grace constitutes a real saint and forms the only essential difference between him, and every unrenewed sinner, it is in vain for any one to deny or attempt to disprove the doctrine of total depravity. If the least degree of grace constitutes a saint, it irresistibly follows, that every one who is destitute of the least degree of grace, is a sinner. This single argument, instead of a thousand, completely demonstrates, that sinners are totally depraved. It is strange, that those who deny total depravity, have not met and refuted this argument, if they could; for they must have known, that if they refuted this argument, they would have refuted all arguments in favour of total depravity, and established their whole scheme of Arminianism. No other reason can be assigned, why they have declined looking this argument in the face, but a consciousness of its being unanswerable. And so long as this argument remains in unanswerable force, Calvinists have a right to maintain and believe, that sinners are dead in trespasses and sins, that they have not the love of God in them, their hearts are fully set in them to do evil, that they are not on the part of Christ, but against him; and that they are enemies to all righteousness, and totally unfit for the kingdom of heaven.

2. If the least degree of grace forms the character of a real saint; then those who deny total depravity, cannot draw the peculiar character of a real saint, in distinction from a sinner. Those who deny total depravity do not and cannot

decently deny, that the inspired writers continually speak of two sorts of men whom they distinguish by very opposite appellations, calling some righteous and some unrighteous; some godly and some ungodly; some believers and some unbelievers; some friends and some enemies of God; some holy and some unholy; and some saints and some sinners. Accordingly, they make a free and familiar use of these scriptural appellations, in writing and preaching on religious subjects; but they seldom undertake to describe these two classes of men, and to point out any internal and essential distinction between them. They can very easily say, that some are better than others, or that some are not so bad as others, in their external conduct.—But this is nothing more than they can truly say of sinners; for some of them are better, and some are worse than others. So long, therefore, as they maintain, that all men have, by nature some moral goodness, they cannot distinguish a saint from a sinner, for they cannot tell how much goodness a man must have to become a saint. If they say, as they sometimes do, that a man must have more holiness, than sin; or that he must do more good, than evil, in order to become a saint; they cannot tell how many holy exercises he must have to outweigh his sinful exercises, or how many good deeds he must do, to outweigh his evil ones. The truth is, one unholy exercise outweighs all the holy exercises that a man ever had or can have; and one evil action outweighs all the good actions that a man ever did, or can do. One unholy exercise of Adam outweighed all the holy exercises he ever had, or will have; and one act of disobedience outweighed all the obedience he ever had paid, or will pay to God. This is true of Adam and of all his posterity, or else there was no need of an atonement, in order to God's saving him, or us. The notion, that the holiness of men can overbalance their sinfulness, is not only unscriptural, but absurd. It counteracts the very nature of things. There is no way possible for those, who deny total depravity, to draw the essential character of a saint, in distinction from that of a sinner. According to their notion and description of a sinner, he is a real saint, for he has a lower, if not a higher degree of grace and it appears from what has been said, that the lowest degree of grace forms an essential distinction between a saint and a sinner. It is easy to keep this essential distinction out of sight in both writing and preaching, and when it is kept out of sight, it cannot be known whether the writer or preacher is a Calvinist, or an Arminian. It has become very common at this day, for writers and preachers to keep this distinction out of sight, either because they do not believe it, or because they know that the doctrine of total dapravity is very offensive to those who are totally depraved, and think better of themselves than they ought to think.

3. If the smallest degree of grace constitutes a real saint; then regeneration is not a gradual, but an instantaneous change. Many who deny total depravity, profess to maintain the doctrine of regeneration. This is true of the Methodists. They talk and preach a great deal about regeneration and a change of heart. But it is very difficult to see their consistency. For if men are not totally depraved, and have real goodness at heart, it is hard to see what need they have of a radical change of heart. Upon their principle, all that sinners need, to prepare them for heaven, is sanctification or growth of grace, or to have their good affections awakened, enlivened, or strengthened. Accordingly, it appears to be the great object of their preachers to awaken their hearers out of stupidity, enkindle their affections, and raise their hopes of future and eternal happiness. And when they have raised their selfish affections to a high degree of joy and rejoicing in God, for his love to them, they view them as subjects of special, regenerating grace: and at the same time, suppose they may fall from this special grace. In this, indeed, they are very consistent. For their converts are only way side, stony ground hearers, whose affections have not been changed from selfishness to pure, holy, disinterested love. Of course, they may, and must fall away. There are others, who call themselves Calvinists and profess to believe in total depravity, that nevertheless maintain regeneration to be not an instantaneous but a gradual change. They suppose, that sinners under serious, religious impressions, reform, seek and strive, and grow better and better, until their fears abate, and their hopes increase, and they gradually become reconciled to God, and to the way of salvation through Christ. Many reputed orthodox divines have maintained, that regeneration is a gradual, and not an instantaneous change. But if the least degree of grace constitutes a real saint, regeneration must be an instantaneous change of heart from total depravity to real holiness. There can be no medium between selfishness and benevolence, between loving and hating God, or being on Christ's part and against him. The moment God sheds abroad his love in the heart of a sinner, he becomes a saint; as soon as God gives a new heart, he takes away the stony heart: as soon as he gives an heart of love, an heart of hatred and enmity is slain. The change from natural death to natural life must be instantaneous: and it is equally true, that the passing from spiritual death to spiritual life must be instantaneous. There is a difference between regeneration and what is commonly called conversion, and sanctification, and the only differ-

ence is, that regeneration is produced by the instantaneous act of the divine Spirit, but conversion and sanctification are both produced by repeated acts of the same Divine Agent. In respect to regeneration, he instantaneously produces the exercise of holiness, but in conversion and sanctification, he produces gradually one holy exercise after another, until the believer arrives at sinless perfection.

4. If the least degree of grace constitutes a real saint; then those who are destitute of grace, have clear and infallible evidence, that they are sinners. They have no evidence, that they are saints while they are destitute of grace; and if they have no evidence, that they are saints, they must have full and infallible evidence, that they are sinners. There can be no middle character between a saint and a sinner. Those that are not against Christ, are for him; and those that are not for him are against him. Sinners never have any true, pure, disinterested love to God, nor to Christ, nor to any of their fellow men.—They are constantly and completely under the dominion of selfishness, which governs all their views, desires, designs, and pursuits. They have precisely the same evidence, that they are sinners, that the great enemy of God and man has, that he is a sinner. He knows, that he is a sinner, because he knows, that all the free voluntary exercises of his heart are selfish. He knows, that when he loves, he loves from selfish motives; when he hates, he hates from selfish motives; and when he acts, he acts from selfish motives. He knows the selfish nature of all his moral exercises, and of course, knows that he is an entirely depraved and sinful creature. And all men, who are destitute of grace, know, that all their moral exercises are selfish; that when they love, they love from selfish motives; that when they hate, they hate from selfish motives; and that when they act, they act from selfish motives. All the exercises of their hearts and all the actions of their lives, give them united and infallible evidence, that they are totally depraved sinners, without the least evidence to the contrary. They have as much evidence as it is possible they should have; that they are not saints, but enemies to God and to all good. Yet, with all this evidence within them and against them, do not many doubt whether they are sinners? Do not some hope they are saints? and do not others really believe they are so? Did not many disbelieve Christ, when he told them they had not the love of God in them? Did not Paul think he was a friend to God, while he was a real enemy to Christ and to all his followers?—Are there not many now, who think they are almost, or altogether christians while they are stout-hearted, and far from righteousness? Nothing but total depravi-

ty can account for such gross and fatal ignorance of sinners. It is because their understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.

5. If sinners have not the least degree of grace, then they never do any thing, which is pleasing to God. They live in a constant, uninterrupted course of disobedience to the divine commands. They live and act under the dominion of that carnal mind, which is enmity to God, not subject to his law, and neither indeed can be. Every selfish exercise and action is a transgression of the law of love. Though they have done many external actions, which God has required, yet they have never done them because they were right, nor because God required them, but merely because they supposed it was for their interest to do them. They have done every thing to please themselves, and not God, who views all their supposed obedience, as disobedience to his holy law. What sinner ever lived a more obedient and blameless life than Paul did, while he had not the least degree of grace? and how did he be view and condemn his obedient and blameless life, after he possessed the grace of God in truth? As graceless sinners always act from their hearts, which are totally depraved; so all their actions, which flow from their corrupt hearts are totally corrupt, criminal, and displeasing to God. No sinner ever did a single duty, and never will so long as he remains graceless. This God has plainly told sinners in his word; and this they will see and feel to be true, whenever their conscience shall be awakened to see the plague of their natural hearts.—When the commandment comes, which they have broken, it will condemn them for all their internal exercises, and external actions. Many sinners imagine they do almost as many duties as good men do, and do them almost as well; but the solemn truth is; that all they call duties are transgressions of the law of love, for which they deserve to be finally condemned and destroyed, and for which they must condemn themselves, if they are ever saved.

6. If the least degree of grace constitutes a saint; then the least saint has all the marks of vital piety. The least degree of grace implies a radical change of heart. The least saint has a new and holy heart, which will produce every species of holy affections; such as supreme love to God, real repentance of sin, a cordial faith in Christ, and unreserved submission to the divine government, a firm trust in divine promises and a sincere desire to do honor to Christ and promote the interest of his kingdom. And as a new heart will produce every species of holy affections, so it will produce obedience to all the commands of Christ, and especially to his dying command. The man who has the

least degree of grace, is a *new* creature, or a *new* man, who will walk in *newness* of life. The least saint has all the marks of a real saint. Though some men differ in their size, and figure, and countenance from others; yet they have all the essential properties of men. So the least saint has all the properties of the greatest saint, though they may be blended with greater degrees of moral imperfection, or inconstancy in duty. The gospel gives the same marks of piety in the least, as in the greatest christians. Christian graces do not exist alone. Where there is one grace, there is every grace. Where there is true love to God, there is true repentance, true faith, true submission, and true obedience to every precept and prohibition. When a man examines himself to know whether he be the subject of special grace, or a saving change, he must inquire not only whether he has one grace, but every grace; not only whether he loves God, but whether he loves Christ; not only whether he hates one sin, but whether he hates every sin; not only whether he obeys one command, but whether he obeys every command; not only whether he loves his friends, but whether he loves his enemies. Every subject of special grace, does actually exercise every holy affection, and desires to perform every christian duty; and indeed he performs his duty, even in neglecting to do what is duty, because he verily think it is not his duty. If any person finds upon inquiry, that he lacks this, that, or the other christian grace, he has reason to draw the affecting consequence, that he has not the least degree of grace, but is a sinner dead in trespasses and sins.

7. If the least degree of grace constitutes a saint; then the world have reason to expect that the least christian should exhibit the marks of a real christian. The man, who appears to be the least of sinners, may appear destitute of every mark of a real christian.—The world have no right to expect that every professor should appear an eminent christian; but they have a right to expect that every professor should give evidence of being a real christian, who is a friend to Christ, is on his part, obeys his commands, and seeks to promote his interests in preference to his own. The world know how well sinners may act; but they are not very apt to call them christians, when they do nothing more than what they know is consistent with an unrenewed heart. They expect that every christian should exhibit the scripture marks of a christian; and discovers not only one, but every christian grace. If real christians would give evidence to the world that they are so, let them be uniform and persevering in exercising all the christian graces. This will carry conviction, that

they are the sincere friends of Christ, and are for him, and not against him.

Finally, let sinners realize the dreadful consequences of being destitute of the least degree of grace. So long as they live destitute of grace, they live in continual disobedience to God, and pursue the path which leads to death. and to an eternal separation from all holy and happy beings, and an everlasting and aggravated punishment in a future state. "There is saith my God, no peace for the wicked."

A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

To the Editors of the Christian Magazine.

The following relation was originally written in a letter to a friend. The writer had been for some years a professor of religion and had made a high profession. She was, at the time to which the following letter has reference, the subject of pungent conviction, which conviction resulted in new and very different views of divine truth. I may add that this letter was written nearly twenty years ago, and without any expectations of its ever being made public. If in your judgment it is fitted to produce conviction in the minds of others in similar circumstances, you are requested to allow its insertion in your valuable magazine.

Dear Friend,

I used to think, that I received the bible as a revelation from God; but scripture and experience convince me, I did not. When I read "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. They hated me without a cause. We will not have this man to reign over us," I thought these and similar passages had reference only to the Jews. But as Nathan said to David, "thou art the man," so I think I have felt this to be my own character, far more forcibly than I ever realized any thing to be mine of a temporal nature. The bible, the Spirit and my own conscience told me, I was the very fool which said in his heart, "There is no God." Christ has been as much a stumbling block to me, as he ever was to the Jews.—When with you I had some religious notions; but how the believer is in Christ, and Christ in the believer, was to me a mystery.—O, how ignorant have I been of my own deformity, and of the purity and extent of the divine law! when I call to mind my former state and how right my way seemed unto me, I feel like a bird that has but just escaped from the snare of the fowler. I trust that I now know, what it is to be lost, that I may be found; to be blind, that I may see; and to be a fool, that I may become wise. It grieves me, when I reflect that my conduct in many respects has been contrary to the gospel.—Alas, I was wise in my own conceit and prudent in my own sight; no wonder therefore, I shewed myself to be a fool.

My late impressions were at first very distressing and very perplexing to me. When the commandment came home to my own case, it revived sin in me and brought to light the hidden works of darkness. When reading the character of man, as hating God and despising the pleasant land, it seemed as though my heart lay on the bible before me; yet I could not endure the thought of becoming a fool in my own eyes, and to give up my own righteousness was like separating the soul from the body. But when it pleased God, of his mere mercy, to shew me his glory, my whole heart turned as with a natural abhorence from what I had esteemed my own righteousness; if it had been even lawful to take praise to myself I could not; my heart would have spurned at the idea. I have now, my dear friend, poured out my whole heart, I hope I have not done it in the spirit of boasting: for, though to my own shame I have loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God, now it appears to me a small matter, that I should be judged according to man's judgment—to God I stand or fall. Yours, &c.

B. F.

For the Christian Magazine.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF RIGHT AFFECTIONS IN OUR RELIGIOUS INQUIRIES.

On a certain occasion, when the Jews were assembled together to observe the feast of tabernacles, "about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught." The Jews were surprised and offended, that one who had been brought up in an obscure village of Judea and had no distinguished advantage for education, should attempt to instruct the doctors of their supposed wise and learned nation. He however, informed them, that his instructions were not his own, but were such as he had been commissioned to deliver from him, who sent him. He also informed them, that the preparation of mind for understanding his doctrines, does not consist in natural quickness and vigor of understanding; but in a sincere desire to know and do the will of God. "If any man," said he, "will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

To illustrate the influence of a sincere desire to know and do the will of God, upon a person in his inquiries after religious truth, is my leading design in the following remarks.

Such a desire, influences the person, by whom it is possessed, to use the proper and appointed means for discovering religious truth. God has established an intimate connexion between using certain appointed means and obtaining a correct knowledge of religious truth. So intimate is this connexion, that no person can expect to obtain such knowledge, without using the divinely appointed means. And the person who is the subject of a sincere desire to know and do the will of God, will be thereby influenced, in his inquiries after religious truth, to use all those means, which God has appointed for that purpose.—The making use of these means will be the natural effect of such a desire. It will influence him diligently to read and study the Holy Scriptures. They contain the will of God as revealed to man. They are full of instruction upon the most interesting and important subjects. By them the will of God is clearly and fully made known. They do, indeed contain all that religious truth, which it is important for us to know in the present world. Does a person, then sincerely desire to know and do the will of God?—He will thereby be naturally influenced to read and study that volume in which the divine will is so clearly revealed. It will be his meditation, day and night.—He will, moreover, be influenced by such desire reverently and constantly to attend upon the instructions of the sanctuary. God has set apart an order of men, whose chief business is to inculcate religious truth. Such were the prophets under the former, and the apostles, under the latter dispensation. Such too are all faithful ministers of the gospel at the present time. It is reasonably expected of ministers of the gospel, that they will so familiarly acquaint themselves with the whole system of religious truth, as to be able to instruct others who have not the same opportunity for reading and study. God has, also, set apart one day in seven, to be employed in worshipping him in the sanctuary, and in attending upon the ministrations of his servants, the preachers of the gospel.—There can, therefore be no doubt that the person, who is the subject of a sincere desire to know and do the will of God, will be thereby influenced, reverently and constantly to attend upon the instructions of the sanctuary. He will regard such attendance as one means, which God has appointed for obtaining a correct knowledge of religious truth.

Influenced by a sincere desire to know and to do the will of God, a person is guarded, in his inquiries after truth, against the influence of many things, which tend to prevent its discovery.

No person, who seriously considers the multitude of conflicting opinions upon the subject of religion, which are embraced at the present day, can doubt that the religious world is full of error.—How shall we account for the existence of this fact? That men, with the inspired volume in their hands, and professing a desire to discover and embrace the truth, do draw, from that volume entirely opposite conclusions, and do embrace radically different doctrines, is certainly a fact worthy our most serious attention. The existence of this fact cannot certainly be ascribed to the bible itself. To suppose, that it is deficient in any respect, would be an impeachment of its divine author. If it is what it claims to be—a revelation from God--it must not only be free from all absurdity and contradiction, but must speak clearly and decisively upon all religious subjects, concerning which it is necessary and important for men to have information. The fact under consideration cannot, then, be ascribed to a want of clearness in the inspired volume. The true cause of that diversity of religious opinion which now prevails in the christian world, must, therefore, be sought in something pertaining to men.—The fault is most certainly, within themselves. Many are not influenced by so sincere a desire to know and do the will of God as they fondly imagine. Prejudices of various kinds blind their minds, and prevent them from discovering the truth. The learned are often prevented from discovering the truth upon the subject of religion, by pride of genius and learning.—By such, an improper stress is laid upon the strength of the powers and faculties of the human mind.—Reason is exalted above revelation, and is thus made to assume a province for which it was never designed. To the decisions of what many are pleased to call enlightened reason, every religious sentiment must be brought and tried. Every religious sentiment, which, in some respects, is above, not to say contrary to reason, must be rejected, as the idle dream of some superstitious bigot or whimsical enthusiast. Whatever the bible says, which does not accord with the preconceptions of reason, must be tortured to make it inculcate a different sentiment, from that, which it seems naturally to inculcate—and one which is more pleasing to the inclinations of the natural heart.—Hence the fact that "not many wise men after the flesh, nor many mighty, not many noble are called," seems naturally to be accounted for by that pride of intellect, or genius, and of learning, which the wise or learned men of the world are so much accustomed to indulge. This too may serve as an answer to the inquiry, why so many of the most learned men of this and other nations have been found in the ranks of infidelity. What was falsely said of an apostle, may be truly said of many learned and philosophical men, that "much learning makes them mad." They are too proud of their learning to be willing to sit at the feet of the poor, despised Nazarene, and learn of him.

Men are often prevented from embracing religious truth by the influence of self love. Any sentiment which is not accordant with this main spring of affection and action in the unrenewed heart, is believed with reluctance, if not rejected with disdain. To him, who is wrapped up in self-love, the bible afford no pleasure. It tells him many painful truths.—

It gives him a description of his own heart, which, if correct, proves him to be in the gall of bitterness, and under bonds of iniquity: to be, indeed, an enemy of God, under sentence of condemnation for his transgressions of the divine law. Such a description he cannot, therefore willingly believe to be correct. He loves to indulge his selfish desires, and wishes to indulge them without disturbance or control. But this he knows he cannot do, if he suffers himself, for one moment, to believe, that his heart is as depraved, and his condition as alarming, as the Bible represents them to be. Such a belief, he is sensible, would disturb him in the midst of his carnal joys, and make him wretched indeed. But he can, by no means, consent to be thus disturbed. Hence, he concludes, either that the Bible is a cunningly devised fable, or determines to make it speak a different language from that which it most naturally seems to speak.— Persons, are, again often prevented from embracing and professing the truth by worldly hopes and fears. Their understandings are, perhaps, convinced of the truth of christianity or of some of its peculiarly unpopular doctrines. But from making known their convictions they are prevented by some worldly hopes or fears.— They perhaps, hold offices of honor and profit in church and state. In these offices they hope to continue for many years. This hope they imagine, will be disappointed, unless they persist in professing an attachment to the same religious sentiments, which they have hitherto professed to embrace. They fear, if they make it known, that their religious sentiments are different from what they once were, they shall lose the favor and patronage of a certain class of men, whom they wish to please; and thus shall suffer essential injury in regard to their worldly reputation and interest.

But against the influence of these, and similar prejudices, hopes, and fears, the person, who in his inquiries after religion, is actuated by a sincere desire to know and do the will of God, is, in a good degree, guarded. His desire to know and do the divine will is a holy desire, flowing from a heart renewed by grace and warmed by love to God. To him, who possesses such a heart, the discovery and knowledge of religious truth appear to be of vast importance. He wishes to know what the truth is, not only, that he may thus ascertain the divine will, but also on account of the intrinsic excellence of the truth itself. His heart is prepared to receive and embrace, and love the truth, whenever and wherever, and by whomsoever discovered.— Against the clear light of divine truth, prejudice does not blind and close his mental eyes. To the positive declarations of the Bible, he does not, through pride of genius and of learning, oppose the decisions of unsanctified reason;

but possessing an humble, child-like disposition, he delights to sit at the feet of Jesus, and from his lips to hear the words of divine truth. Nor is he blinded by self-love against the light of truth.—His unholy, selfish desires have, in a measure, been subdued by the Holy Spirit. He is not therefore, afraid, that the truth will disturb his happiness and make him wretched. Besides, he wishes to know the worst of his case. He does not wish to be deceived upon so momentous, and all-interesting a subject as that of his own character and standing in the sight of God. He wishes to have his own character fully exhibited to his view, and ardently desires, that this may be done without delay. Nor is he prevented from embracing and professing the truth by worldly hopes and fears. He fears God rather than man. He loves God, and, therefore, wishes to please him. He fears his holy displeasure and indignation, and therefore, does not act the hypocritical part of secretly believing the truth, and, yet, of denying it before men. He chooses to be hated and ridiculed by men, and to be disappointed in regard to his dearest earthly hopes, rather than to forfeit the approbation of God. He is, therefore, guarded, in his inquiries after religious truth against the influence of many things, which often prevent men from discovering and embracing it. A sincere desire to know and do the will of God influences a person, in his inquiries after religious truth, to ask the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Such a person is afraid of being deceived. Though he is, in a good degree, guarded against the influence of prejudice, self-love, worldly hopes and fears, and other things, which tend to blind the mind, and prevent the discovery of religious truth. Yet against the influence of these he does not view himself as completely guarded. He knows, that his heart is naturally deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; and by it he is still afraid he shall be deceived. Upon his mind, he is sensible, early impressions and associations may still have an undue influence, and may lead him astray from the path of truth into the path of error, before he is aware. Yet he dreads, most of all things deception upon this subject. From being deceived, he knows he can be effectually secured by nothing but divine teaching. Instead, therefore, of depending upon the energies of his own mind to enable him to discover the truth, he considers them as but comparative weakness, and beseeches God to grant him the gracious aid of his Spirit to enlighten his understanding, and to lead him into all truth. Such being the sincere desire to know and do the will of God upon a person in his inquiries after religious truth, well did our Savior say, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

F.

From the Utica Repository.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—BY BUNYANUS.

CHAPTER. II.

Then I turned my attention another way, and observed two young men walking aside by themselves, whose countenances showed that the discourse of Evangelist had made a deep impression upon their minds. The name of the one was Sensitive, and that of the other, Sincere. Both appeared to be filled with deep distress, and the tears flowed copiously from the eyes of Sensitive.

Oh, said Sensitive, what shall I do? The wrath of the king is revealed against us. How stupid have I been, that I did not think of it before.

And I, said Sincere, begin to think, that we do, indeed, hang over a dreadful pit, which will, sooner or later, swallow up our city, and all that inhabit it.

Oh, said Sensitive, I will never more be so stupid. I will go to our minister and inquire what I shall do to escape the wrath to come.

And I, said Sincere, will go and settle my affairs, and prepare to leave the city.

Then I observed that there were a number of churches in the city of Destruction, whose pulpits were supplied by ministers, who were had in very high esteem and who were very popular in the city; such as Doctor Smoothman, Doctor Soothing, Mr. Slightheal, Mr. Save-all, and several others. Sensitive belonged to the parish of Doctor Smoothman, with whom he was well acquainted, and going directly to his house, desired to speak with him. So the Docter took him into his study, and after bidding him to be seated, inquired what he wanted. At which Sensitive burst into tears, and was so overcome that he could not speak. Then said Doctor Smoothman, compose yourself, young man, and tell me what is the matter.

Sensitive. Oh, sir, I fear I am undone forever.

Dr. Smoothman. Undone forever! Why, what has happened to you?

Sen. I am a sinner, sir, and I fear I shall fall into the burning pit. I fear that the king is very angry with me.

Dr. Sm. If that is all, you may quiet your fears. We are all sinners; but the king is very merciful.

Sen. But I have heard, sir, that the king is angry with the wicked every day.

Dr. Sm. That is, with those who are very wicked, as swearers, thieves, drunkards, adulterers, and the like. But you are not guilty of any of these sins.—I have been acquainted with you from a child, and have always known you to be a modest, sober youth, and never addicted to any disreputable practices.

Sen. But I have heard that the law of the king requires us to love him with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves; and this without any interruption, upon pain of his eternal displeasure; which I fear I have not done.

Dr. Sm. That was the law given to man before the fall. The king then required perfect obedience, upon pain of his eternal displeasure. But since we have become fallen, imperfect creatures, he has placed us under a milder law, better suited to our circumstances. If we lead a sober, regular life, go constantly to church, are honest in our dealings, kind to the poor, and do not fall into any violent, out-breaking sins, we have no reason to fear but that he will accept us. It is true that we may be guilty of some little sins, some venial ones, (as who is there, that is without some ?) but the king knows that these are infirmities which are incident to our fallen nature; and as our good deeds so far overbalance these, the king will certainly bestow upon us a rich reward.

Sen. You give me great comfort, sir. I thank you for your wholesome instruction, and shall endeavor to profit by it. But I feel that my fears have very much disturbed my mind; what shall I do to regain that composure which I have lost?

Dr. Sm. I perceive that you are somewhat discomposed; and I would advise you to banish all such thoughts as occasioned your late distress, and avoid every thing which is likely to suggest them. Endeavor to divert your mind.—For if you dwell on these gloomy subjects, you will be in danger of falling into a settled melancholy, and perhaps derangement of mind, which would be a dreadful calamity. Resort to some harmless amusement. Frequent the company of your young friends. Take an innocent hand at cards, or engage in the sprightly dance, or go to the theatre. And when you cannot avail yourself of these, read some diverting book, such as a novel or a play, to prevent the recurrence of gloomy thoughts. These means are admirably calculated to prevent, or remove such distress of mind as yours.—And if these things will not afford you relief, and restore your former tranquility, I know not what will.

Sen. I feel greatly obliged to you, sir, for your kind instruction and advice. I have always been particularly fond of these innocent amusements, as most of the young people in our city are. I feel my mind greatly relieved already; and hope that by attending to your directions, I shall soon regain my wonted tranquility and cheerfulness.

Then I saw that Sensitive took his leave with a cheerful air, and returned to his house, well satis with himself, and with his minister, and no longer entertained any thoughts of leaving the city.

After this, I turned to see what was become of the other young man who had been alarmed at the preaching of Evangelist. And I soon perceived that he had reached his house, and was retired to his room, to reflect upon his present circumstances, and the great danger to which he was exposed. I had observed that he did not appear to be so much moved, at first, as Sensitive had been; but I now saw that what he had heard had taken a strong hold of his mind, and that he was walking his room, absorbed in deep thought. Upon this, one named Conscience came in, and addressed him with a stern air.

Con. All that Evangelist said concerning you is true.

Sincere. I know it is, and I have no longer any doubt that our city will, sooner or later, be destroyed and that if I remain in it, I shall perish in its ruins.

Con. I have often told you the same things; and have often reproved you for your stupid and careless life.

Sin. You have, indeed; but I have slighted your admonitions, and have been unwilling to listen to your voice.

Con. You have so; and you deserve now to perish with the city. Look back also on your past life. Consider how many acts of rebellion against the king you have committed; and that, too, when I have remonstrated against your conduct, in the most decided terms. Consider how many times you have promised to amend your life, and have broken your promises; how often you have resolved to go on pilgrimage, and have acted contrary to those resolutions.

Sin. All that you say is true. I am, indeed, in great danger. What shall I do? I fear the king will not accept me now, although I should leave the city, and go on pilgrimage. If I remain here, I shall perish; if I leave the city, I shall perish. Ah me! who can endure the wrath of the king?—Oh that I had never been born.

Con. Remember, also, how foolishly you have spent your time; how many precious moments you have wasted in vain and criminal amusements; how often you have drunk deep of the streams of sensual pleasure, not only contrary to my advice, but on purpose to get rid of my unwelcome company.

Sin. Oh the precious moments that I have murdered! The recollection of each plants a dagger in my bosom. What a fool have I been, to trifle, as I have done, upon the brink of eternal burnings! I cannot bear to hold my finger in the candle for one minute; how then can I bear the torments of the pit, through the countless ages of eternity! Oh! that word—*Eternity!* How it rings in my ears! Could I hope that the torments of the pit would ever have an end, the anticipation of them would be less intolerable! But who can dwell with the devouring fire? Who can inhabit everlasting burnings?

Then I saw that Sincere was in great agony of mind; and although he threw himself upon his bed, he found no rest, but spent the night in meditating terror, and looking frequently for the pit to open beneath him; and swallow him up. And if he fell into a momentary slumber, he would presently start, and scream as if the fiends of the pit were already seizing him for their prey. In the morning he rose, and attempted to attend to some business; but his mind was so disturbed with the thoughts of his present situation, that he found it impossible. In the afternoon, he resolved to go to his minister, Doctor Soothing, (for he belonged to his parish) and obtain his instructions and directions about setting out on pilgrimage, as he was determined to set out without any more delay.—Accordingly he went to the house of Doctor Soothing, who received him with great kindness, and inquired in the tenderest manner what was the cause of his distress.

Sincere. It is the fear, sir, of the wrath of the King, that makes me tremble. I see myself exposed to fall into the burning pit; while I remain in this city. And I fear it is too late for me to escape. Do, sir, tell me if there is any hope that I may yet escape from the wrath to come.

Doct. Soothing. There is every ground of hope that can be wished. If the king has given you a desire to escape, it is an evidence that he intends to gratify that desire. It gives me sincere pleasure to see you thus anxious for your safety, because I consider it an indication that the king has designs of mercy towards you. It is the king himself that has given you this view of your danger, and excited these desires to escape it; and where the king has begun a good work in any, he will carry it on.

Sin. But I have heard that it is necessary for me to repent of my sins, to enter in at the wicket gate, and go on pilgrimage; and I fear I have not that repentance which is unto life.

Doct. S. Do you not desire to repent? And are you not greatly distressed to think of the folly and wickedness of your past life?

Sin. I am, indeed, greatly distressed, to think that I have, by my own folly and wickedness, exposed myself to the wrath of the King; and I think I do sincerely desire to have that repentance which is necessary to my being delivered from the punishment to which I am exposed.

Dr. S. "He that desires to repent does it already in some measure." And it must needs be very pleasing to the King to see you thus distressed, and grieving that you have offended him.

Sin. Your words are full of consolation, sir. And I think myself happy in having the privilege of your instructions. But I understand sir, that I must leave the city, and go on pilgrimage, if I would secure the favor of the King.

Dr. S. You must ultimately leave the city, and go on pilgrimage; but you cannot go yet. You must wait the King's time. No one can enter the gate which is at the head of the way, by an act of his own. The King must send a messenger to carry you through the gate. You must wait, therefore, the good pleasure of the King. All that you can do is, to reform your life, to use the means of obtaining the King's favor, and to remain in the city until he shall see fit to send his messenger to carry you through the gate. But if you faithfully persevere in the use of means, and in this way do what you can, antecedently to passing the gate, there is no fear but that the King will accomplish all the rest.

Sin. What are the means which I must use to obtain the King's favor?

Dr. S. You must pray to him, go constantly to church, read good books, and lead a strictly moral life.

Sin. Is it certain, that if I use these means, I shall obtain his favor?

Dr. S. Yes for he said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

Then I observed that Sincere appeared to be greatly relieved from his distress; and though his countenance still had the appearance of deep thoughtfulness, it was evident that the conversation of Dr. Soothing had kindled a hope, resolved to pursue the course pointed out to him by his minister, and to be very diligent in it, that he might not fail of success.

Upon this, I turned my attention again towards the gate, and saw Evangelist engaged in conversation with a man, whose countenance indicated a sedate, but deeply anxious mind. So I drew near, and listened to their discourse.—Then said Evangelist to the man, whose name was *Thoughtful.*

Ev. What is the cause of your distress?

Th. I see that I am, indeed, a sinner, and that I am exposed to the wrath of the King.

Ev. You are, no doubt, a greater sinner than you are sensible of and are justly condemned; but this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that the Prince Immanuel came into the world to save sinners. Only comply with the prescribed conditions and you may be delivered.

Th. What are the conditions which I must perform?

Ev. You must cordially justify the King, and condemn yourself. You must remember your own evil ways, and your doings that have not been good, and loathe yourself in your own sight, for your iniquities and for your abominations. You must approve of the method which the king has provided of bestowing pardon upon his rebellious subjects, through the atoning blood of the Prince Immanuel. In short, you must enter the gate, and walk in the narrow way that leads to life.

Th. I am convinced that the King is right, and that his sentence of condemnation upon me is just; for I have done nothing but rebel against him all the days of my life. But I find that it is one thing to be convinced of this in my conscience, and another thing to approve of it in my heart. I find my heart wholly opposed to the King, and to his law and government; and chiefly because he condemns me. If I could only be assured that he intends to show favor to me, I think I could love him; but while he condemns me, I cannot.

Ev. That is you could love a sin-pardoning King, but not a sin-punishing King. And yet, the King will pardon some, and punish others. And he does perfectly right in both; and you ought to love him for doing right.

Th. I know I ought; but I do not; and this is my misery. For if I could only persuade myself that the King is unjust, it would be some support to me. I think I could bear up under the infliction of an unjust sentence; but, to be condemned by a just sentence, and to have no excuse, nor palliation of my conduct; to have no room to complain of the King; to have my own conscience condemn me; that is what I cannot bear. Under this, I feel my spirits wholly sink. Oh! what shall I do?

Ev. Submit yourself to the King. He has determined to pardon some, for the glory of his grace; and he has determined to punish others according to their deserts, for the glory of his justice. You know not which he has determined respecting you.—But you know that his glory is of more importance than your personal interests. Give up yourself into his hands, to be disposed of as he shall see best. Why should you wish the King to sacrifice his glory to secure your personal interests? His glory is of more importance than the interest of any creature; and he does right in making it his supreme object: and in disposing of every creature in that way which will best promote it.

Th. I know he does right in preferring his glory to my happiness. I know I deserve to perish forever. I know that I am altogether unreasonable and wicked in preferring my happiness to the glory of the King. Oh! what a vile creature I am! How glorious and excellent is the King, even in the execution of his threatenings! I deserve to be cast off, and if he does cast me off, he will be glorious in it, and I think I can praise him for it. How glorious is his mercy! how glorious is his justice! I will praise him for both. I will submit. I will put myself into his hands. "And if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him."

So saying, I beheld him enter the Wicket Gate, with a composed countenance; and Goodwill said unto him, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." And, observing in his hand a book which Evangelist had given him, he said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Then, having bid him to call at the house of the Interpreter, where he should be more fully instructed in the King's statutes. he dismissed him to go on his way, saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you."

So he went on his way, still keeping his book in his hand, and sometimes reading therein, and sometimes talking to himself, of the glorious character of the King and of the might of his terrible acts. And presently I heard him sing:

"The Lord is God; 'tis he alone
Doth life, and breath, and being give;
We are his works, and not our own;
The sheep that on his pastures live.

His truth and justice I'll proclaim;
His bounty flows an endless stream;
His mercy swift, his anger slow,
But dreadful to the stubborn foe.

His works with sovereign glory shine,
And speak his majesty divine;
Let every realm with joy proclaim
The sound and honor of his name."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"A Sermon" and "Restraints on depravity" are received.

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SERMON.

ROMANS, III. 31.—*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

Mankind are not apt to think systematically on any subject, and therefore find it very difficult to reconçile the various parts of any system of sentiments, whether civil or religious. The constitution of our national government is a system, and perhaps a very consistent system of civil policy; but many, who see and approve the various parts of it separately considered, cannot easily see the consistency, which runs through the whole. The Bible contains a system of religious sentiments, which we believe are altogether consistent; but it has been found by the experience of ages very difficult for any person to see the consistency of the various doctrines and duties contained in this system, and quite impracticable to make some others see it. Though the law and the gospel are inseparably connected and perfectly consistent with each other; yet it has been found next to impossible to make this consistency appear to people in general. The apostles found great difficulty in making the Jews see and believe, that the gospel which they preached was consistent with the law given at mount Sinai. And if you look into the best divines and expositors, for an hundred or two hundred years past, you will find that there is no point which they have so unsuccessfully laboured to clear up, as the consistency of justification by faith alone, and the threatenings of the divine law. But this is no reason why we should not endeavor to see and explain the consistency between the law and gospel, agreeably to the spirit of the text, which presents this difficulty to our present consideration "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. In the preceding verses, the apostle is treating of that law ,by which all, who were under it and had broken it, stood condemned to endless misery, and of that gospel, which provided pardon and salvation for all who were condemned by the law, if they would embrace the offers of life through the atonement of Christ. And to distinguish the law from the gospel, he calls the former the law of works and the latter, the law of faith. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded.—By what law? of works? Nay: but the law of faith. Therefore we conclude a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." This leads him to state the difficulty in the text. "Do we then make void the law through faith; God forbid: yea, we establish the law." It appears from the connection of these words, that the apostle means by faith the law of faith; that is, the gospel in distinction from the law of works, that is, the law given at mount Sinai, which condemned every transgressor of it to everlasting punishment.

This therefore is the question proposed in the text, Does the gospel make void the law? or does the promise of pardon to believers in the gospel, make void the penalty of the law to transgressors of it? or is there any inconsistency between the law and the gospel? Taking the passage in this sense, it naturally leads us to show,

I. What the law is.

II. What the gospel is. And,

III. That the gospel does not make void the law, but establishes it.

I. Let us consider what we are to understand by the law in the text. The law is sometimes used to signify all the Old Testament writings. In this sense it is often used in the book of Psalms in general, and in 119th psalm in particular. The law sometimes signifies the whole Mosaic dispensation, or all the moral, ceremonial and judicial precepts given to the children of Israel, before the gospel day. But by the law is sometimes meant, that which is founded in the nature of things, and is commonly called the moral law. In this sense it is evidently used in the text. For the apostle had just been speaking of that law, by which all the Jews stood guilty and condemned before God, which was not the ceremonial, or judicial, but *moral* law. This law requires perfect holiness or sinless perfection. "Hear O Israel, says Moses, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." This our Savior explains to be the sum and comprehension of the moral law. Then one of them which was a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him, and saying master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."—Universal benevolence or perfect holiness is what the moral law requires of all men, at all times, and in all circumstances. This is the comprehensive precept of the moral law. If we now inquire after its penalty, we shall find it to be the curse of God or eternal destruction. This penalty was publicly and solemnly denounced against every transgressor at mount Ebal. After the Levites had denounced particular curses against particular transgressors of the moral law, they proclaimed in general, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen." If we now turn to the third chapter of Galatians, we shall find the nature and extent of this penalty of the law clearly explained. "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse.—For it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Here the curse is denounced against him who is guilty of the least transgression or moral imperfection.—And the nature of this curse, the apostle explains in the following words. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Here it appears, the curse of the law means that curse which Christ came to redeem men from, and what that curse is, appears from the process of the last day, "Then shall he say unto them on his left hand, Depart from me *ye cursed*, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The curse of the moral law is that eternal death, which is the proper wages of sin. And here it should be remembered, that both the precept and penalty of the moral law is founded in the nature of things. It is right in the nature of things, that all men should be perfectly and perpetually holy; and it is equally right in the nature of things, that every transgressor of this perfectly and immutably holy law, should suffer the penalty of eternal death. So long, therefore, as God remains God, and men remain moral agents, it will be right and just, that he should require them to be perfectly holy, upon pain of his everlasting displeasure. Both the precept and penalty of the moral law mentioned in the text, are immutably holy, just, and good. Let us now,

II. Consider what we are to understand by the gospel. The gospel sometimes signifies the whole scheme of redemption by Christ, and comprehends all the counsels, operations, and laws of God. The gospel is sometimes used to denote all the precepts, prohibitions, promises, and threatenings in the New Testament.—But it is more often taken in a more strict and limited sense, to signify good news, or the proclamation of pardon and peace to all who cordially embrace Jesus Christ. This proclamation was made to the shepherds by the angel, at the birth of Christ.—"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Our Savior himself proclaimed pardoning mercy on the terms of faith and repentance, to all who heard him preach. We read, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel." Again he said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And he commanded his apostle to proclaim the same glad tidings to a perishing world. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Paul preached according to this divine direction in the synagogue at Antioch. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this name is preached unto you the *forgiveness* of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." In Ephesians, 1. 7. the apostle speaking of Christ says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." And he says the same thing in his epistle to the Colossians. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the *forgiveness* of sins." It is peculiar to the gospel, to promise salvation through faith in Christ. And this peculiarity is often emphatically called the gospel itself. In this sense of the gospel, the apostle calls it the *law of faith* in the context, and *faith itself* in the text. He uses the same mode of expression in the 3d chapter of Galatians.—"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, that is, the gospel, we were kept under the law, shut up under the faith, that is, the gospel, which afterwards should be revealed." The gospel, therefore, may be briefly defined thus: It is a proclamation, or promise of a full and final pardon to all who believe in Christ, Having described the law and the gospel, and distinguished them from each other, I proceed to show,

III. That the gospel does not make void, but establishes the law. According to the representation in the text, the apostle meant to refute an objection, which he supposed some had made, or would make against his preaching the doctrine of justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." You say we preach justification by *faith alone*, which sets aside good works, and makes *void* the law. This we deny, and affirm that we *establish* the law, by preaching justification through Christ's atonement. Ever since the apostle's day, some have supposed the law and gospel cannot be reconciled with each other. Those who maintained justification by works, have always complained of those who have maintained justification by faith alone, as setting aside good works and making void the law; while those who have maintained justification by faith alone, have as constantly complained of those who maintain justification by works, as setting aside the gospel.

If we now recollect what has been said concerning the law and the gospel, we shall easily perceive why it has so often been supposed, that the gospel makes void the law. It has been said, that the law requires perfect holiness, and threatens eternal destruction for the least transgression. And it has been said, that the gospel promises a full and final pardon to those who are condemned by the law, upon the condition of their believing in Christ. Now it is asked, how can the *promise* of the gospel be fulfilled, consistently with the *threatening* of the law? How can the gospel tell a man he shall be saved by faith? When the law tells him he must be damned for his transgression of it? Here seems to be a double difficulty. One is to reconcile the gospel with the veracity of God; and the other is to reconcile the gospel with the justice of God. This leads me to observe,

I. That the gospel does not make void the veracity of God, in respect to the penalty of the law. The plain reason is, the veracity of God is not pledged in the penalty of the law. If the law pledged the veracity of God, that the transgressor should certainly suffer the penalty of eternal death; then the promise of pardon upon the condition of repentance and faith, would really make void the penalty, and contradict the veracity of God. Many suppose, that God pledges his veracity in the threatening of every law. But if this were the case, there could be no room for forgiveness under the divine government. If God had pledged his veracity in the threatening to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," there would have been no room for an atonement, nor a possibility of salvation through a Mediator. When God pledges his veracity, he is morally obliged to maintain it. He does pledge his veracity in his promises, and therefore is morally bound to do whatsoever he promises to do, on the condition on which he promises. If his veracity is as much pledged in his threatenings as in his promises; then he is as much obliged to fulfil his threatenings as his promises. But if this be true, then he is as much obliged to make every transgressor of his law eternally miserable, as to make every believer of the gospel eternally happy: or in other words, he is obliged to make the believer both eternally happy and eternally miserable at the same time. The truth is, God never does pledge his veracity in the precept or penalty of any law.—When he says to every man, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," he does not pledge his veracity, that every man shall actually love him with all his heart; but only declares what is right and what ought to be. He means to say, that every man ought to love him with all his heart. His precept is designed to measure his duty. It fixes obligation upon every man to love him supremely and perfectly. This is right in the nature of things, and the indispensible duty of every man, whether he performs his duty, or not. So when God declares, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them, he does not mean to pledge his veracity, that every transgressor of his law shall certainly perish forever; but only declares what is right, or what the transgressor, in justice, deserves to suffer forver. It is right and just on God's part, to punish every transgressor of his law forever; but he does not mean to pledge his veracity, that he will actually inflict eternal punishment upon every transgressor. Now if the penalty of the law only expresses the punishment that the transgressor deserves and not a promise of God, that he will actually inflict the deserved punishment; then the promise of pardon to the penitent believer, does not make void the penalty of the law. God may pledge his veracity, that he will save the penitent believer, though he has told him in the threatening of the law, that he deserves to be punished forever. God's declaration of the sinner's desert in the law, is entirely consistent with his promise to pardon him upon the terms of the gospel. The gospel leaves the law in its full force.—The believer may be under the precept, and deserving the penalty of the law, while at the same time, he stands entitled to pardon and salvation, by the promise of the gospel. And this is in fact the case in respect to every believer.—The law requires him to be perfectly holy, and condemns him for the least transgression or moral imperfection; but the gospel promises him pardon for the sins for which the law condemns him. The gospel which pardons the believer every day is perfectly consistent with the law which condemns him every day. For God pledges his veracity in the gospel to fulfil his promise to the believer, but does not pledge his veracity in the law, to fulfil his threatening to the transgressor. And now,

2. The gospel does not make void the justice of God displayed in the penalty of the law. Though the penalty of the law does not pledge the veracity of God, yet it does display the justice of God. In threatening eternal death to the transgressor of the law, God expressly declares that he deserves such a punishment, and that his retributive justice disposes him to be willing to inflict it. By the penalty of the law, God means to manifest his power, his authority and his disposition to punish every transgressor according to his deserts. When he says, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them," he means to express his infinite displeasure at sin, and his real disposition to manifest that displeasure by the everlasting punishment of the sinner. But if he pardons the sinner, whom he has said he is disposed to punish forever, upon the terms of the gospel, it does not make void the justice of the law. Here lies the ground of difficulty, to reconcile the grace of the gospel with the justice of the law; or in other words, to make it appear, that his grace in pardoning the sinner does not make void his justice in condemning him. Now, it is easy to see, that if God does more fully display his punitive justice in pardoning the sinner, according to the terms of the Gospel, than in punishing him, according to the penalty of the law, then the gospel is so far from making void the law, that it does actually and effectually establish the law. And the truth of this will appear, if we consider the nature of pardon or forgiveness, and the ground of it. And here it is to be observed, in the first place, that forgiveness consists in freeing sinners from that eternal punishment which is threatened in the law.—Every sinner is naturally a child of wrath and heir of hell. He stands condemned by the law and exposed to the execution of it.—But when God forgives sinners upon the terms of the gospel, he frees them from the wrath to come, and finally absolves them from the punishment, which he had threatened to inflict upon them. This looks like giving up his justice and altering not only his purpose, but his feelings towards the objects of his grace. It looks as though his grace had made void his justice, or that he had ceased to feel that disposition to punish sinners, which he had solemnly expressed in the awful threatenings of his law. But this appearance will utterly vanish, if we consider,

Secondly, the ground of his forgiving penitent believers. He does not forgive them merely for their repentance, or faith; but solely on the ground of Christ's atonement. The apostle says, "Believers are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." And again he says, "They are accepted in the beloved; in whom they have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of. his grace." The atonement of Christ is the soul ground of the believer's pardon and justification before God. But it was the grand design of the atonement of Christ to display the punitive justice of God, or that justice which is exhibited in the penalty of the divine law. God's laying on Christ the iniquities of the world, or his causing him to suffer and die on the cross in the room of sinners, displayed his vindictive justice more clearly and strikingly, than he could have done by punishing all mankind personally. By subjecting Christ the Son of his love to all the pains and agonies of the cross in the *room* of sinners, he gave the highest testimony to the whole universe of his unalterable disposition to punish sin according to its desert.—Through the sufferings of Christ, he expressed in the clearest manner possible, his feelings towards sinners, and practically said that he would by no means clear the guilty, in contrariety to his justice, which he had expressed in the penalty of the law. This is agreeable to what the apostle says of the design of Christ's atonement. "Whom God hath set forth to a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins—that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—Now if the atonement of Christ has displayed the justice of God more clearly and fully, than the execution of the penalty of the law can do; and if God pardons believing sinners solely on account of the atonement, which so fully displays his justice; then his forgiving them on this ground, is so far from making void the law, that it establisheth it. God appears to have the same regard to justice in forgiving the believer, as in punishing the unbeliever. The ground, upon which he pardons and justifies those who believe the gospel, effectually establishes the justice of that law, which condemns those who reject the gospel to eternal death. And every sinner that is saved through faith, will always have as much reason to think, that God was as really disposed to send him to hell, as if he had actually sent him to that place of punishment. Thus the gospel may forever stand by the side of the law, and pardon those believers whom the law condemns, without doing the least injury to the *veracity* or *justice* of the Supreme Law-giver." Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the gospel does not make void the law; then it does not secure the salvation of all men.—The author of a treatise entitled "Calvinism improved," has endeavored to prove the salvation of all men, from the very nature of

the gospel. He supposes the gospel has entirely superceded the law. He supposes Christ suffered the penalty of the law in the room of sinners, and thereby freed all men from suffering it. But if what has been said be true, the gospel has established the law, and only opened the way for God to forgive in grace those whom he might punish in justice. The gospel has not in point of justice, laid God under obligation to save a single sinner. It is true, the gospel pledges the veracity of God, to forgive all believing sinners, and leaves all the rest in a state of condemnation, without the least ground of hope. Christ did not, and could not suffer the penalty of the law, for he never transgressed the law and was never condemned by it. The atonement of Christ, therefore, has not altered the precept, nor the penalty of the law, nor removed the ill desert of sinners. They are as guilty and ill-deserving, as if Christ had not died; and so long as they remain in the state of nature they are under the condemnation of the law, without Christ and without hope in the world. While the gospel promises life to believers, it threatens death to unbelievers. The plain language of it is, "He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—If the obedience of Christ had fulfilled the precept of the law, and his death had fulfilled the penalty of the law, in the room of sinners, hen the gospel would have wholly superceded the law, and secured the salvation of all men But the atonement of Christ did neither of these things; and therefore every scheme of universal salvation, which is founded on the atonement of Christ is both unscriptural and absurd. Those who deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, build their belief of universal salvation upon the mercy of God without any regard to the atonement; but all others who maintain this doctrine, profess to believe it either wholly or partly on the atonement of Christ; and for this reason they are more inconsistent than Deists. It is highly probable, however, that all or most all Universalists are really Deists, and build their doctrine and hopes, not on the atonement of Christ, but on the mere love or mercy of God. So that no explanation of the gospel will have the least tendency to convince them of their fatal error.—Yet it may be of service to explain the gospel properly and plainly in order prevent men from embracing Universalism.

2. If the gospel does not make void, but establish the law; then it is of great importance in preaching to keep up the distinction between law and gospel. These were clearly distinguished from each other under the Mosaic dispensation. The gospel was not exhibited in the moral, or judicial laws, but lay veiled in the rites and ceremonies, which typified Christ and the promise of pardon

to the penitent and believing sacrificers. The law and the gospel are still distinct under the New-Testament. The moral law binds every one to love God supremely and his neighbor as himself upon pain of eternal destruction. It is only the gospel, which requires all to believe in Christ, and promises to believers eternal life. The gospel is founded on the law, and cannot be understood without understanding the law, nor can it be loved, without loving the law. This connection and distinction between the law and the gospel ought to be clearly exhibited by those, who undertake to preach both. But how many preachers blend the law and gospel together which prevents their hearers from understanding either, and leads them into dangerous errors.—Many desire to hear the gospel preached without the law, and when they hear it preached in such a manner, they find no difficulty in embracing it. But when they hear the gospel preached as founded on the law and establishing the law, they feel as much opposed to the gospel as to the law; for they plainly see that they must approve of both the precepts and penalty of the law, in order to approve and accept the offers of the gospel. Though there be but a few professed antinomian preachers of the gospel at this day; yet there are many who really preach in an antinomian manner. All the Moravians, who are so much extolled for their successful preaching are generally professed Antinomians, and preach the gospel without the law, and it is no wonder that they make so many converts. The Arminians maintain, that the gospel is a new law, accommodated to the depraved hearts of sinners, which they can cordially embrace without a new heart; and it is no wonder that their preaching is generally so pleasing to their hearers. Those who call themselves strict Calvinists agree to condemn both Antinomianism and Arminianism; but yet by neglecting to preach the law, or by blending law and gospel together, they often please their hearers as much as Antinomians, or Arminians. For when the law and gospel are blended together, the hearers are very apt to overlook the law, and attend to what they call the gospel which they love. But few modern preachers say much about the law, which they know people generally dislike, and choose to employ their eloquence upon the grace and glory of the gospel, which captivates the depraved heart of sinners. Those who preach the gospel so as to establish the law, are often called legal preachers. But if ministers wish to enlighten, convince, and convert their hearers and guard them against dangerous errors, they must exhibit both the law and the gospel in a clear and intelligible light.

3. If the gospel does not make void the law; then the doctrine of justification by faith alone,

through the atonement of Christ is not a licentious doctrine. It is often said, that the doctrine of justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law, sets aside good works and opens the door to all manner of licentiousness. But this is a groundless objection against the true doctrine of justification by faith in the atonement of Christ, which does not make void, but establishes the law. Believers who are pardoned and justified through the atonement of Christ, are laid under double obligations to a strict, constant, and universal obedience to God. They are bound by the law and by the gospel both to live perfectly holy. The gospel as much binds them to live soberly, righteously, and godly, as the law does. The apostle solemnly denies that his doctrine of justification by faith makes void the law, or tends to licentiousness. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? The objection may be justly retorted against those who maintain justification by the deeds of the law. For they suppose the law is abated, and that they can obey it without any change of heart, or supreme love to God, But the faith, which the gospel requires, works by love, that is, flows from that pure, holy love, which the law requires, and which is the source of universal obedience. Their works are unholy works, but the works of the true believer are holy works.—Their doctrine allows men to live in the state of nature, which is a state of total depravity; but the doctrine of justification by faith, requires men to live in a state of holiness. And who can doubt, whether a state of depravity has not a greater tendency to licentiousness, than a state of holiness? We may appeal to observation on this subject. Where does licentiousness most abound? Does it most abound among those who maintain the strict doctrine of justification through faith in Christ, or among those who maintain the doctrine of justification by the deeds of the law? The doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, certainly lays the strongest external and internal restraints upon the human heart, and affords the surest guard against licentiousness. Those who object against the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, have more to lose, than to gain, by comparing their doctrine with that which has been called the orthodox doctrine in all ages of christianity.—The Arminian doctrine of justification by the deeds of the law, has never been very productive of good works, either in England, or America. The experiment has been made, and the Calvinistic doctrine of justification by faith has produced the best effect.

4. If the gospel does not make void, but establishes the law;—then we may see why unreserved

submission to God is absolutely necessary in order to embrace the gospel. Those who suppose the gospel is only a new and milder law, than the moral law, see no occasion for any submission in embracing the gospel, for they suppose that sinners can embrace it without any change of heart, and obtain pardon and justification, by their external, unholy obedience. And those who view the gospel as entirely unconnected with the law, can see no occasion for unconditional submission to God, in order to embrace it. And if it were true, that the gospel is only a new and milder law; or if it were true, that the gospel is entirely unconnected with the law, there would indeed be no occasion for unconditional submission, in order to exercise saving faith in Christ. But if the gospel be founded on the law, and distinct from it, yet inseparably connected with it; then a sinner must approve and love both the precept and penalty of the law, and cordially and unreservedly submit to the condemnation of it, before he can cordially comply with the terms of the gospel. When the law is brought home to the convenience of sinners, they feel that they are under a sentence of condemnation, which God is under no obligation to remove, and which they do not know that God will ever remove. This throws them into the sovereign hands of God, who may save, or destroy them, as seems good in his sight.—And so long as they refuse cordially to submit to divine sovereignty, they are conscious that they cannot accept the offers of mercy through Christ. The law now becomes a school master, to teach them to accept the punishment of their iniquities. And they feel they must submit, or die.—The doctrine of justification by faith alone implies the doctrine of unconditional submission. And all who understandingly and plainly teach the doctrine of justification by faith alone, never fail to preach the doctrine of unconditional submission. Hence it is pretty evident, that but few do preach the true doctrine of justification plainly and intelligibly. Ministers generally seem to take it for granted, that every body understands the old Calvinistic doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the deeds of the law. Our forefathers brought this doctrine with them here, and ministers generally heretofore used this phraseology. But do they now very often undertake to explain and prove this doctrine? And what is the consequence? The consequence is that people in general do not understand the doctrine of justification, and the doctrine of unconditional submission, which is inseparably connected with it. There is no Calvinistic doctrine,I believe, so little explained and inculcated at this day, as the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And yet this is a doctrine which forms the most important distinction between Calvinists and Arminians and Antinomians and Unitarians.—The denial or misunderstanding or perverting the doctrine of justification by faith alone, opens the door to the most erroneous and fatal sentiments. And no doctrine more directly tends to lead into the knowledge and belief of all the essential doctrines of the gospel, than the doctrines of justification, which establish the law.

5. If the gospel does not make void, but establishes the law; then we may see why sinners, when they understand the gospel are as much opposed to it, as to the law. The reason is obvious. It is because the gospel is founded on the law and establishes it.—They do not deny that they hate and oppose the law, which condemns them to everlasting punishment, but they are not so ready to allow, that they hate and oppose the gospel, which brings glad tidings and promises eternal life.—And viewing the gospel in this false light, as unconnected with the law, they do not hate it, but love it. This is not strange, for they naturally love themselves supremely, and every thing which they think will promote either their temporal, or eternal happiness. But the gospel is inseparably connected with the law, and they see it to be so, when they understand the gospel, and this presents an insurmountable difficulty in the way of their complying with the terms of the gospel. It appears to them as hard to embrace the gospel, as to obey the law.—Christ and the apostles preached the gospel so plainly and intelligibly, that sinners understood it, and hated and opposed it, with all their hearts. And were it universally preached as plainly and intelligibly now, sinners would as generally hate and opposed it.—They would find, that they could not exercise saving faith, without exercising unconditional submission to the penalty of the law, which their carnal mind cannot do. When they realize that they are under the condemnation of the law and the wrath of God is abiding upon them, they see that they must become submissive and reconciled to God, before they can love Christ, and rely upon him alone for salvation. They cannot exercise faith in Christ and dependance on him for pardon and acceptance in the sight of God, without renouncing all self-dependance and self-righteousness, which they had rather die, than do, until their heart is renewed. This the apostle says was the great difficulty which the Jews found in the way of their embracing the gospel. They had a zeal of God but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God.—For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. The same difficulty sinners now find in embracing the

gospel, which establishes the law that condemns them to eternal death. To this they must cordially submit, before they can love Christ for suffering and dying to justify God and condemn them.—If the gospel offered salvation to sinners, without submission to the law, it would not have been rejected in Christ's day nor at this day. But it offers salvation to them upon no lower or easier condition, than their cordial approbation, not only of the precept, but the penalty of the law. And for this reason alone, they hate and oppose the gospel, as much as the law, and voluntarily reject the counsel of God against themselves.

6. If the gospel does not make void the law, but establishes it; then impenitent, unbelieving sinners are in a most guilty and dangerous condition. They are guilty of disobeying the law, and of disobeying the gospel, and stand condemned by both the law and the gospel for their disobedience and unbelief. They live every day in this state of guilt and danger, whether they realize it, or not. If they do not realize it, their danger is increased, and if they do realize it, their guilt is increased. They are continually treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath. While God is waiting, they are delaying; while God is calling, they are refusing to hear. If they do hear, they will not, if they can help it, understand. If they do understand, they will contend, and either excuse or justify themselves, and implicitly charge God foolishly. All their inward exercises and outward circumstances are conspiring to harden their hearts, and strengthen their opposition to the gospel. The nearer the kingdom of God is brought to them, the more they are averse to entering in; and the plainer the terms of the gospel are exhibited before them, the more sensibly and strenuously they reject them.—They are out of the reach of all human means and exertions, bound by the cords of sin, and choosing death rather than life. There is but one gleam of hope before them, and that is, the sovereign mercy of God, which they perfectly hate and oppose. This is the scriptural and just description of all sinners, which, if they deny, they will prove to be true. Now, my hearers, this subject solemnly calls upon you to inquire, whether you are sinners. You have heard what the law requires of you, and what it condemns you for. You have heard, that the gospel establishes the law. And you have heard, that you must cordially approve of the gospel, which establishes the law, in order to be pardoned and justified in the sight of God. In the view of these things, do your consciences tell you, that you have ever embraced the gospel? Have you ever felt the obligation and condemnation of the law? Have you ever cordially approved of the law that bound you and con-

demned you? Has the condemnation of the law ever led you freely to renounce all self-righteousness and self-dependance, and to exercise that faith in Christ, which consists in relying on his atonement alone, for pardon and justification in the sight of God? Though these may be hard, yet they are plain questions. Paul could answer them to his own satisfaction. He said, "I know in whom I have believed." The penitent humble believing christian can answer them to his own satisfaction. But no impenitent, unbelieving sinner can. He must be conscious, that no such views and feelings have ever existed in his mind. He has a great and indispensable duty to perform. He has to look down, and fall down, and to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This is the easy and only condition, upon which any sinner can escape the wrath to come, and obtain eternal life.—Now is the accepted time, and may be the only day of salvation. Repent then immediately, and believe the gospel, and thou shalt be saved.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

A Dialogue between Justin and Simon.

Simon. Well, my friend, I had yesterday an opportunity of hearing Rev. Mr. P. preach, of whom I have so often heard you speak.

Justin. Did he answer your expectations?

Sim. I cannot say that he did not. He appeared to be a man of talents and learning. His elocution was uncommonly good, and there was an earnestness and solemnity in his manner, which could not fail to interest, if not please his audience; but I did not like, and I did not expect to like his sentiments.

Jus. What was the subject of his discourse?

Sim.. The natural state of man, or what you call total depravity. I always expect to hear something about this, when I hear preachers of this description.

Jus. What was his text?

Sim. The words of Paul. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Jus. If you had not expected to hear something about total depravity before, I should think you would when you heard the text announced. I see not how any preacher could say any thing relative to this text, and avoid the subject of total depravity.

Sim. I don't know how that is. But I have heard Rev. Mr. B.—— preach upon the same text, and he had nothing to say, upon the subject of total depravity. The subject which he derived from it, was the excellence of christianity, and he discussed this subject in a style and manner the most beautiful and interesting. There was not one word in the discourse that could offend a person of any religious sentiments whatever.

Jus. Do you remember what

he said the apostle meant by the phrase "dead in trespasses and sins?"

Sim. No I do not. I believe he did not explain it particularly. I recollect that he said considerable upon the gross idolatry and vice into which the Ephesians were sunk before the gospel reached them, and the peculiar excellence of this in improving their virtue, elevating them to christian privileges, and multiplying the sources of their intellectual enjoyment.

Jus. Did Mr. P.——whom you heard yesterday, undertake to explain the meaning of the phrase. "dead in trespasses and sins?"

Sim. He did. Nearly one half of his sermon was taken up in settling this point. I remember that he said among other things, that this phrase did not mean, as it has sometimes been supposed to mean, that the Ephesians had no power to discern between moral good and moral evil, or that they had no power to do good and not evil, but simply that they had no heart to do good. He considered the assertion of Paul, that the "Ephesians were dead in trespasses and sins" the same as saying that they were totally depraved; and this assertion respecting them, he supposed was true respecting all mankind in an unrenewed state.

Jus. And what is there in all this that is untrue?

Sim. I cannot believe that all mankind in an unrenewed state are totally depraved. I acknowledge, that after hearing Mr. P——'s explanation of his terms, and his reasoning upon this subject, I found it rather difficult to disprove the truth of his assertions. But after all, there is so much in the doctrine of total depravity, that is repulsive to my feelings, and so much which appears to me contradictory to well known facts, that I cannot at present believe it, however ingeniously it may be defended.

Jus. The circumstance that it is repulsive to your feelings, may be a reason why you do not believe it. But is it, in fact, any reason why you should not believe it? The truth that we must die is repulsive to our feelings. But surely this is no argument that we shall live forever. The high way-man finds, upon reflection, especially when conscience charges home his guilt, that the truth, respecting his own conduct, is exceedingly repulsive to his feelings. But the repulsiveness of this truth is no argument in favor of his innocence.—The doctrine of future punishment is repulsive to the feelings of all the wicked; and on this account, it doubtless is, that so many disbelieve it. But as you profess to believe in future punishment, you cannot but admit, that in this instance, the reasoning is false. It is readily admitted, that the doctrine of total depravity is repulsive to the feelings of sinners. It is a humiliating doctrine. The admission of it strikes at the root of that pride, which they delight to cherish. It is an alarming doctrine. No sinner can admit the truth of it without acknowledging both his guilt and his danger. But it becomes us to consider that a doctrine may be not the less true, because it is humiliating to us or because it strikingly evinces our guilt and danger. Besides, our Savior has informed us, that mankind are better pleased with falsehood than with truth on the subject of religion. Nothing less than this is taught us in the following words. "Men loved darkness rather than light."—Now if it be a fact that the truth is repulsive to the feelings of mankind, and you find the doctrine of total depravity repulsive to your feelings, it cannot certainly be a very natural or logical conclusion that the doctrine is false. I would not undertake to say that the repulsiveness of this doctrine is of itself sufficient evidence that it is true. But I do say that this is just what might be expected on the supposition that it is true.

Sim. Well, whether the doctrine be true or false, I cannot deny that it is exceedingly repulsive to my feelings, and not only so, but apparently inconsistent with facts.

Jus. Will you have the goodness to name some of these facts?

Sim. I cannot, at once, recollect all of this description, which have sometimes occurred to my mind. But I can mention a few. There are individuals within the circle of my acquaintance, who make no pretension to a change of heart, that are honest in their dealings, amiable in their dispositions, kind and liberal to the poor and distressed, strict in their observance of the Sabbath, and regular in their attendance upon public worship. Now to believe that these persons, who are among the most respectable and worthy of my acquaintance, are all totally depraved, is in my view to contradict the evidence of my own senses.

Jus. Let me entreat you, my friend, not to be too hasty in your decision on this subject, you remember the admonition of our Lord: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." The outward appearance is sometimes deceptive. The scriptures in various places teach us, that the real characters of men are frequently very different in the sight of God, from what they are in the eyes of each other. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart." That there may be a fair exterior, while the heart is corrupt in the sight of God, is placed beyond all dispute by the following words of Christ to the Jews. "Woe unto you Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so, ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Besides, if you will only consider in what total depravity consists, you will not, I apprehend, find any peculiar difficulty in seeing that the characters which you have named, may be the subjects of it.

Sim. If I will consider in what total depravity consists! Pray, then, tell me what you and others who so often use this term, mean by it. Tell me, if you please, in the first place what you mean by depravity.

Jus. By depravity I mean that selfishness, which is a transgression of the law of God. The law requires mankind to love God supremely and their fellow creatures as themselves. Consequently that regard to self which is inconsistent with this love, is a transgression of the law. In the exercise of this selfishness, in which by the way, they are active, voluntary, and free, consists their depravity.

Sim. Why do you affix the term *total* to this selfishness or depravity?

Jus. Because, it has the entire possession of the heart. While mankind are in an unregenerate state they have no supreme love to God, and no disinterested love to their fellow creatures. On the contrary, all their affections, desires and purposes are under the controul of that selfishness which, in its nature, is opposition both to God and man.

Sim. But have you no difficulty in reconciling this view of total depravity with the apparent honesty, kindness, liberality, soberness, and general morality, which I have just named as traits in the characters of some with whom we are both acquainted.

Jus. None at all. You will yourself allow, that a man may be honest and kind and liberal and sober and generally correct in his outward deportment merely from selfish motives; it is impossible to tell exactly how far motives of interest, a regard to reputation, the fear of punishment, and other considerations of a similar nature, may in any case, restrain the selfishness or depravity of man. But we might, I think, expect at least as much apparent goodness from the influence of these things, as we actually see among mankind, even upon the supposition that they are totally selfish. Indeed when we consider how many and how valuable are the advantages attending an upright deportment, it is truly astonishing that even selfishness itself, does not produce a greater degree of morality than is found to exist. This can be accounted for I apprehend only upon the principle that every strong passion hastens precipitately to its own gratification, uniformly preferring a present good of less value, to a future good of greater value.—Now if in view of the restraints which a wise providence has placed upon the depravity of man, we might expect a higher degree of morality than really exists, how absurd is it to attempt to prove from what there is, that the hearts of men are not totally depraved?

Sim. I know that much of the apparent goodness of mankind may be traced to selfish motives, and I would not contend that there is any thing truly good in that which has its origin in selfishness. But there is in some of the unregenerate a tenderness of feeling, a nobleness of spirit, & an amiableness of character, which does not appear to me to arise from selfishness, and which I cannot help viewing as inconsistent with total depravity.

Jus. That these traits of character are known to exist among those who give an unequivocal evidence of a change of heart. I readily acknowledge. Whether they are the effects of self-love, or not, I deem it unnecessary now to determine, as I presume that you will not yourself contend that they arise from that supreme love to God and disinterested love to man, in which all holiness primarily consists. If there is nothing in these traits of character which is truly holy, they are no evidence against total depravity, whether they can be shewn to have their origin in selfishness or not. Now that they may not be holiness, and that they may have nothing in them of the nature of genuine holiness, will be perfectly evident to every one who will duly consider the three following facts. 1. These traits of character are often seen in irrational creatures, which are incapable of holiness. The Lion has a noble spirit. The Lamb has a mild and amiable disposition, and deep feeling for others of their species in distress, is common to animals of almost every description. 2. Those who in other respects appear to be entirely destitute of holiness, often exhibit these traits of character in a very striking degree. The youth, who is forgetful of his God, and engaged with all his heart in the pursuit of pleasures which God has forbidden, often has much in his appearance that is interesting and amiable.—The wretch, who blasphemes his Maker, often feels for a fellow creature in distress, and would generously grant him relief. 3. The traits of character above mentioned, are often the immediate cause of sin. How often is tenderness of feeling in parents, the cause of that excessive indulgence of their children which is contrary to the commands of God and ruinous to the best interests of men! How often does what is considered by the world as nobleness of spirit, lead the subjects of it to disdain the meekness which the gospel inculcates, and to adopt as their guide the most ruinous maxims of the world! To this are to be attributed those laws of honor, which encourage the taking of revenge, and influence multitudes to decide their differences, by the pistol or the sword. How often are those qualities, which serve to render character amiable in the view of the world, the very same which influence the subjects of them to seek the applause of men, rather than the approbation of God! Now are these traits of character, which are found in bad men as well as good—in beings who are incapable of holiness as well as in rational creatures, and which are as often, to say the least, the means of leading mankind to the commission of sin, as to the practice of holiness, any evidence of true holiness, in those in whom they are found? Is it not an indubitable fact that many in whom all those traits of character are seen, are entire strangers to the exercise of that supreme love to God which the law requires? Are they not conscious themselves, and are not all around them satisfied, that they love the world more than God? With all their kind sympathies and tender feelings, would not nine out of ten of them acknowledge, that they love themselves more than their neighbors? And should they be met with the provocation of an enemy, would they not, instead of loving him, and praying for him, and doing him good agreeably to the nature of true benevolence, and the commands of the Saviour, meditate and seek revenge in exact accordance with the nature of supreme selfishness, and the general spirit of this world? But I need not remind you, who are so well acquainted with the scriptures, that "if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him;" or that all affection to our fellow creatures, which admits of hatred to enemies, is destitute of every thing like the nature of holiness.

Sim. I confess that there is something in these suggestions of yours which is new to me, and which seems to deserve my serious consideration. But let me tell you, that I cannot receive the doctrine of total depravity, because it appears to me inconsistent with the free agency of man.

Jus I suppose you admit that some degree of depravity is consistent with the free agency of man?

Sim. Certainly. I never thought of questioning the fact that mankind are free and accountable agents, nor the truth, that they are in some measure depraved.

Jus. Do you then believe that the free agency of all mankind is partially destroyed. This appears to be the necessary consequence of admitting that they are partially depraved, if depravity, as you have intimated, is inconsistent with free agency.

Sim. You misunderstand me, I do not mean to say that every degree of depravity is inconsistent with free agency, but only that total depravity is so.

Jus. I understand you perfectly. You suppose that total depravity is inconsistent with free agency; but that partial depravity does not interfere with it at all. Your assertion is perfectly intelligible.—But you will pardon me, my friend, if I tell you that it is not consistent with itself. Few positions, I apprehend, can be plainer than this: If depravity when total, that is when the heart is wholly under its influence, entirely destroys the free agency of man; then it must interfere with his free agency, when it is but partial, and that too in proportion to its influence. If he is depraved in a small degree, his liberty is slightly impaired. If he is exceedingly depraved, as all admit that some are, his free agency must be exceedingly impaired. On the other hand, if a slight degree of depravity leaves a man in the entire possession of free agency, it is impossible to see how this can be impaired by a greater degree.—And if under the influence of a great degree of depravity, he retains all the freedom of which he is capable, it certainly requires more acumen than I possess, to perceive how this can be destroyed by total depravity. Our conceptions on this subject may be assisted by considering again, for a moment, in what depravity consists. If depravity consists in the exercise of sinful affections, or in that selfishness which is opposite to the supreme and disinterested love which the law of God requires, there is no appearance of its being inconsistent with free agency. On the contrary, the existence of this depravity always implies the exercise of free agency. If mankind were not free agents, there could be no more depravity or sinfulness in selfish affections, than in any others.—It is because they are capable of exercising these purely benevolent affections, which the law of God requires, that they are sinful or depraved in the exercise of those which are selfish. The exercise of totally sinful affections is no more inconsistent with free agency, than the exercise of perfectly holy affections.

Sim. But is not this total depravity on which you lay so much stress a native depravity? I have certainly heard it so represented. If I were to admit, as you are confident I must, that total depravity is no more inconsistent with the free agency of man than partial, I certainly cannot admit that native depravity is consistent with it.

Jus. The terms native, and by nature, have indeed often been used in connexion with this subject and for one I am disposed to think, that they convey a very important idea, which no other language could more readily or definitely convey. At the same time I am aware that each of these terms is liable to be misunderstood and abused. When I speak of native depravity, I do not mean a depravity which has an existence previously to the exercise of moral agency, or which ever exists or can exist but as the effect of free moral agency. I do, indeed, think this depravity to be natural, and in this opinion I am supported by very high authority. Paul speaking of himself and the Ephesians as they were before their conversion, says, "In time past we all had our conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others." In supposing that they are naturally sinful or depraved, I do not, however, suppose that they are so without that which is essential to their sinfulness or depravity. Their being naturally sinners no more proves that they are not active, free, or voluntary in their depravity, than the fact that some are naturally eloquent and that others are natural singers proves that they speak and sing involuntary, or from an imperious necessity. The plain truth on the subject appears to be this. It is natural for mankind as soon as they become moral agents to sin voluntary. Sin always implies voluntariness or free agency. The common saying that mankind are naturally sinners, does not mean as some seem absurdly to suppose it does; that they are obliged by the constitution of their nature to sin, whether they choose to do it or not. But it means, that with all necessary power to be holy, they are naturally inclined to sin.

Sim. I cannot possibly see how any one can be criminal for what is natural to him.

Jus. Not even, I suppose, if it is natural for him to be criminal.

Sim. But if mankind are wholly inclined to sin; and that to as you suppose from the first moments of their free agency, it appears to me that they must be under a fatal necessity of sinning, which must exculpate them from all blame.

Jus. You seem to forget my friend that sin and blame are always inseparable. Why do you speak of of men's being under a fatal *necessity* of sinning as though it could not be as natural for them to act freely as it is to sin when it is well understood between you and me that there is no sin or depravity which is not the result of free moral agency. If you will look at the subject with little more attention, I am persuaded that you will see the impropriety of intimating as you have several times done, that a person wholly inclined to sin cannot be to blame. This is certainly nothing less than saying in other words, if a man is sinful to the extent of his capacity he becomes perfectly innocent and loses all capacity to sin; or if he is criminal for *all* his moral exercises and conduct there is no criminality in any of them. Why you should consider the supposition that mankind are inclined so early to sin as an objection to the doctrine under consideration, I cannot perceive. It is in my apprehension as easy to see that their first moral exercise may be wrong, as that any of their subsequent moral exercises may be wrong. Nor do I see any thing in the suppositon that the moral exercises of sinners may be constantly sinful, more absurd in itself, or inconsistent with their freedom and accountableness than in the supposition that these are alternately sinful and holy. But the opposite of all this is, in my apprehension, a self evident truth. If a person can at any time exercise a sinful affection, one for which he is justly considered criminal, this may be his first, as well as any subsequent moral exercise. And if he is capable of exercising a sinful affection intermingled with those which are holy, he is equally capable of exercising sinful affections constantly. You my friend never thought of objecting to the goodness of God, because he has *always* been holy, or because he is *perfectly* holy. But if the eternal and perfect holiness of God is not inconsistent with his free agency and praise worthiness, the early and the total depravity of sinners is no objection to their free agency or blame worthiness.

Sim. But after all, friend Justin is there evidence that mankind are in fact totally depraved. I admit that you have given, to say the least, a plausible answer to the objections which I have made to this doctrine. But I ought not certainly to admit it as true, unless I can see some positive evidence in its favour.

Jus. By no means. I have been the more prolix in my answers to your objections, because I thought these were operating to prevent your serious and candid attention to the evidence in favor of the doctrine. If these are effectually removed, you will, I am persuaded, immediately perceive ample evidence in support of it. As, however, I have but a moment more to spend with you, at the present time, I shall merely direct your attention to a very few of the leading facts which convince me that all mankind are totally depraved, in the sense in which I have explained this term. This, in the *first* place, is the obvious import of the scriptures, on this subject. Solomon says, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." Paul says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Christ said to the Jews, whose hearts were undoubtedly like those of other men in a state of nature, "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you." 2. This obvious import of the scriptures agrees exactly with what we are taught by our own experience.—When we consider what the law of God requires, and compare the feelings of which we are the subjects, in an unrenewed state, we may perceive at once, that they are all wrong. Selfishness, in some form or other, is the ruling passion of which we are conscious. We know that we do not love God above every other object. And we are equally conscious, that we do not love our neighbor as ourselves. Although we are expressly commanded to love our enemies, and although we perceive the duty and propriety of this command; yet we know that we naturally hate them. I will only add, 3. Our observations, so far as it extends, confirms what the scriptures and our own experience teach respecting human depravity. Mankind in their natural state uniformly appear to feel and act as though they were destitute of those holy affections, which they are required to exercise, and to be entirely under the influence of others which are of an opposite nature. To give a single instance to illustrate this truth: They appear to love the world. But it is written "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

FATAL EFFECTS OF DEISM.

Illustrated in the conduct of William Beadle of Weathersfield, Con. who closed the sacrifice of his wife and children with his own destruction.

The following account of the tragical scene is taken from an Appendix, attributed to the Hon. Judge Mitchell, to the sermon, delivered by the Rev. John Marsh, D. D. at the funeral of Mrs. Beadle and her four children.

"He fixed on the night succeeding the 18th of Nov. 1782, for the execution of his nefarious purpose, and procured a supper of oysters of which the family ate very plentifully. That evening he writes as follows. 'I have prepared a noble supper of oysters, that my flock and I may eat and drink together, thank God, and die.' After supper he sent the maid with a studied errand to a friend's house at some distance, directing her to stay until she obtained an answer to an insignificant letter he wrote his friend, intending she should not return that evening. She did however return. Perhaps her return disconcerted him, and prevented him for that time. The next day he carried his pistols to a smith for repair. It may be, the ill condition of his pistols might be an additional reason for the delay. On the evening of the 10th of Dec. some persons were with him at his house to whom he appeared as cheerful and serene as usual. He attended to the little affairs of his family as if nothing uncommon was in contemplation. The company left him about 9 o'clock in the evening, when he was urgent as usual for their stay.—Whether he slept that night is uncertain; but it is believed he went to bed. The children and maid slept in one chamber. In the grey of the morning of the 11th of Dec. he went to their bed chamber, awakened the maid and ordered her to arise gently without disturbing the children. When she came down stairs, he gave her a line to the family physician, who lived at the distance of a quarter of a mile, ordered her to carry it immediately, at the same time declaring that Mrs. Beadle had been ill all night, and directing her to stay until the physician should come with her. This he repeated sundry times with a degree of ardor.

There is much reason to believe he had murdered Mrs. Beadle before he awakened the maid. Upon the maids' leaving the house he immediately proceeded to execute his purpose on the children and himself. It appears he had for some time before carried to his bed side, every night, an axe and a carving knife. He smote his wife and each of the children with the axe on the side of the head as they lay sleeping in their beds. The woman had two wounds in the head. The skull of each of them was fractured. He then with the carving knife cut their throats from ear to ear. The woman and little boy were drawn partly over the side of their beds as if to prevent the bedding from being besmeared with blood. The three daughters were taken from the bed and laid upon the floor, side by side, like three lambs before their throats were cut. They were covered with a blanket and the woman's face with a handkerchief. He then proceeded to the lower floor of the house, leaving marks of his footsteps in blood on the stairs, carrying with him the axe and knife. The latter he laid upon the table in the room, where he was found, reeking with the blood of his family. Perhaps he thought he might use it against himself, if his pistols should fail. It appears he then seated himself in a windsor chair with his arms supported by the arms of the chair. He fixed the muzzles of the pistols into his two ears and fired them at the same instant.—The balls went through the head in transverse directions. Although the neighbors were very near and some of them awake, none heard the report of the pistols.—The line to the physician obscurely announced the intentions of the man. The house was soon opened, but alas, too late. The bodies were pale and motionless, swimming in their blood, their faces as white as mountain snow, yet life seemed to tremble on their lips. Description can do no more than faintly ape and trifle with the real figure.

Such a tragical scene filled every mind with the deepest distress. Nature recoiled and was on the rack with distorting passions.—The most poignant sorrow and tender pity for the lady and her innocent babes, who were the hapless victims of the brutal, studied cruelty of a husband and father in whose embraces they expected to find security, melted every heart.—Shocking effects of pride and false notions about religion!

To paint the first transports which this affecting scene produced, when the house was opened, is beyond my reach. Multitudes of all ages and sexes were drawn together by the sad tale.—The very inmost souls of the beholders were wounded at the sight and torn by contending passions. Silent grief, with marks of astonishment were succeeded by furious indignation against the author of the affecting spectacle, which vented itself in coherent exclamations. Some old soldiers, accidentally passing through the town that morning, on their way from camp to visit their friends, led by curiosity, turned in to view the sad remains. On the sight of the woman and her tender offspring, notwithstanding all their firmness, the tender sympathetic tears stealing gently down their furrowed cheeks, betrayed the anguish of their hearts. On being shown the body of the sacrificer, they paused a moment, then muttering forth an oath or two of execration, with their eyes fixed on the ground in silent sorrow, they slowly went their way. So awful and terrible a disaster wrought wonderfully on the minds of the neighborhood, nature herself seemed ruffled and refused the kindly aid of balmy sleep for a time. To adopt the language of Dr. Marsh from his sermon at the funeral, "pride, impatience and cowardice first led him to think of destroying himself and family and operated powerfully in bringing him to determine upon it. He had a high opinion of his intellectual abilities and was uneasy with the meanness of his personal appearance and slenderness of his fortune. He writes— 'my person is small and mean to look on and my circumstances were always rather narrow, which were great disadvantages in this world; but I have great reason to think that my soul is above the common mould. There are but few men capable of deism. They are when found like a diamond among a million of pebbles.'" Such were the vain and wretched sentiments of this deluded and pitiable monster of a man!

William Beadle, it appears, was a native of the County of Essex in the island of Great Britain. In early life he became acquainted with a deistical club in the city of London, from which he probably imbibed these pernicious ideas, which issued in the awful catastrophe as before related. He was avowedly both a deist and a fatalist and has left many writings in vindication of his erroneous opinions, which at present, are in the possession of the Rev. John Chester of the city of Hudson.—Mrs. Beadle a native of Plymouth in Massachusetts, was from a respectable family, "a comely person, of good address, well bred, unusually serene, sincere, unaffected, and sensible." She came to her melancholy end in the thirty third year of her age. The oldest of her children, a son, was in his twelfth year, and the youngest, in her seventh."

From the Utica Repository.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—BY BUNYANUS.

CHAPTER III.

While Thoughtful thus went on with a moderate pace, I observed another person coming after him, with a quicker step; and as he drew near, I perceived that

Thoughtful knew him, and addressed him by name :

Th. How is this, neighbor *Ardent?* I understood that you had gone on pilgrimage long since.

Ardent. Oh, my friend, I can never be sufficiently thankful that I am here. I have been greatly deceived, and well nigh lost forever.

Th. How did that happen ?—Did you not take directions from Evangelist, and receive a book from him which contained a map of the way ?

Ard. Yes. But I did not pay much regard to the directions of Evangelist, nor to the book which he gave me ; for, to my shame be it spoken, I did not relish either.

Th. From whom then did you take directions ?

Ard. From Mr. *Blind-guide.*—He goes about you know, through our city and its suburbs, imitating Evangelist, and urging people to go on pilgrimage. Soon after I had heard Evangelist preach, and began to feel the danger of remaining in our city, I had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Blind-guide, and was much better pleased with his preaching. So, after I had resolved to go on pilgrimage, being dissatisfied with the directions of Evangelist, which appeared to me exceedingly discouraging, I took an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Blind-guide, from whom I hoped for something more agreeable.

Th. And what did he say to you ?

Ard. He told me that the doctrines which Evangelist preached were gloomy and discouraging, and that it was no wonder that the inhabitants of our city disliked them. He said, that Evangelist gave such directions as were adapted to prevent people from setting out on pilgrimage, and likely to drive them to despair.—And indeed, this was just as I had myself thought of them, and so I listened to him the more readily. So he told me that there was a way into the way, which was both easy and safe ; and that he could furnish me with a guide, called Repentance who would accompany me as far as I had need of him. Then he called one to be my guide, whose name I afterwards learned was *False-repentance.* So I thanked him for his kindness and set out. My guide then conducted me through a by-path, up the hill of *Selfish-sorrow*, in the neighborhood of Mount Sinai, and led me to a village which he called *Peace-in-believing*, near the town of *Morality*, into which I entered by a gate which was called the gate of *Experience.* But I have since learned that the true name of the village is *False-peace*, and of the gate *Delusion.* Here my conductor left me, telling me that I was now in the way into the way, and advising me to remain here for a season at the house of Mr. *Self-confidence*, with whom he assured me I should spend my time very agreeably. So I remained at the house of Mr. Self-confidence for some time, in company with many others, who, like me, had set out on pilgrimage, but who seemed to be well satisfied for the present with having gone so far. At length I thought I would return privately, for a short space, to our city to attend to some affairs which I had left abruptly in my haste to depart.—So I returned to my house, whence I had gone out, and found it empty, swept and garnished. Then I sent and invited seven of my old companions, more wicked than myself, who came and welcomed my return, with great cordiality, and spent the evening with me in drinking and making merry, and in scoffing at pilgrims, and ridiculing the warnings of Evangelist.—After they were gone, and I had retired to my chamber, and was endeavoring to compose myself to rest, one rudely burst in upon me, and cried with a voice of thunder, "Where art thou, Ardent?" I knew by his voice that it was Conscience, though I had not seen him before since I had resolved to set out on pilgrimage. And as his voice had always appeared terrible to me, so now it was far more terrible. He then set before me the folly and wickedness of my past life, in such a manner as I had never seen it before. He reminded me of my former resolution to go on pilgrimage; and threatened me with the vengeance of the King, if I tarried another day in the city. So I spent the remainder of the night in great agony of mind, and as soon as it was light I opened the book which Evangelist had given me, but which I had long neglected, hoping to find something to alleviate my distress: but the first sentence that met my eyes was the following: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my council, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh."—This greatly increased my distress; for it seemed to seal my condemnation. I then wandered out into the streets, scarcely knowing whither I went, till whom should I meet, but Evangelist himself. At the sight of him my confusion was increased, and I was disposed to avoid him. But the thought occurred to me that probably he could tell whether it were now too late to set out on pilgrimage; and that the certainty of death would not be worse to me than my present fearful apprehensions. So I stood still, till he came up to me; and having told him where I had been, and what I had done, he told me that I did indeed deserve to be cast off; but he advised me to go to the gate, to throw myself down at the feet of him that kept it, acknowledge my guilt, and submit myself to his disposal. Accordingly I did so; and to my surprise and joy, Goodwill said to me, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And so I am here, a monument of mercy. Oh, how vile I am! how astonishing it is that I am not now in the pit!

So saying he sung as follows:

"My crimes are great, but don't surpass
The power and glory of thy grace;
Great God, thy nature hath no bound,
So let thy pardoning love be found.

Oh wash my soul from every sin,
And make my guilty conscience clean,
Here on my heart the burden lies,
And past offences pain my eyes.

My lips with shame my sins confess
Against thy law, against thy grace;
Lord, should thy judgment grow severe,
I am condemned, but thou art clear."

So they went on, conversing together and sometimes reading in their books, till they came to a place where stood a little shed by the road side, under which sat a man in the same dress which Evangelist wore, but of a younger look, and less gravity of countenance, and before him lay a number of books resembling those which Evangelist had given to the pilgrims. On seeing the pilgrims, the man whose name was *Plausible*, rose up and came to meet them, with a smiling countenance; and bowing to them, said,

Pl. Your servant, gentlemen! I perceive by your garb that you are pilgrims. I am truly glad to see you. I am stationed here by the Lord of the way, for the accommodation of pilgrims. My business is to furnish them with correct copies of the King's statute book. Those you have, were furnished, I presume, by him that is called Evangelist. He is a good man, and means well, but is not very enlightened. If you will give them to me, I will give you more correct copies instead of them, made by very worthy, learned, and excellent men.

Ph. We did indeed receive our copies from Evangelist, and we have not discovered any thing in them but what is worthy of the King; and we are not inclined to part with them.

Pl. But you surely would wish to have correct copies. You doubtless wish to know what the King has indeed commanded, that you may in all things walk according to his will, and meet his approbation. If you have an incorrect copy, and do according to what you find written therein, you will do wrong while you think you are doing right.

Th. That is true. It is indeed important that we have correct copies. But we are not yet convinced that our copies are incorrect. If you can make it appear that your copies are more correct than ours, we may be willing to exchange.

Pl. The copies we now make use of, are only translations from the languages in which the King's scribes writes. And if the copies from which your translation was made had been correct, the translation is very defective.—

Those who made it did not well understand those languages, and they have translated many passages wrong in order to favor their own sectarian notions. And besides, the copies they translated from, were not correct. Learned and excellent men of modern times have made a thorough examination, and have found a great number of errors in the common copies. I can furnish you with an Improved Version, made from a corrected copy, on which you may depend.

Ard. Brother, had we not better make the exchange? I should be sorry to depend upon an old and incorrect copy, when we may have an improved one.

Th. Let me look at one of your books.

So Plausible gave him one; and on turning it over a little, he perceived that the part called the old testament was not in it at all, and in the part called the new testament, many alterations were made. Then he said,

Th. This book does not contain all that ours does. Why is so much of it omitted?

Pl. The new testament contains the faith of Pilgrims. The old may be of some use but it is not necessary for pilgrims now. If they have the new, they have all the instructions of the Prince Immanuel, and the writings of the scribes who were immediately taught by him.

Th. But I remember that the Prince Immanuel commanded men to "search the scriptures," meaning those which had been written before that time; and that certain people were afterwards highly commended, because they searched the same scriptures daily, to see whether what they heard was true. I am not yet prepared to renounce the authority or despise the use of those scriptures which were thus spoken of by the Prince Immanuel himself and his intimate friends.

Pl. But if you do not choose to part with your old books, at least be persuaded to take each of you one of my copies. You will find them very useful, I assure you.—They were made by men of great learning and abilities.

Ard. Had we not better take them, brother? if they do not prove useful to us, they can do us no harm.

Th. I see so many parts left out and so many alterations made, that I suspect there is some design to deceive us. I have understood that the King's corporation circulate none but such copies as we have. And there are as learned and good men belonging to those corporations as any in the world. They would know, if there were any important defects in those copies, and would not circulate such as were materially incorrect. I am disposed to have nothing to do with any of these pretended improved versions.

Pl. But if you are displeased with the omission of which you speak, I have other copies in which there are no omissions.—They are only improved translations made from the same original copies as those which you have. Here is one made by John, the Itinerant, a famous pilgrim, which is in high esteem among his followers. He made this translation on purpose to avoid some of those gloomy doctrines which your copies teach, which are so dishonorable to the Lord of the way, and so discouraging to many pilgrims. And where he could not wholly avoid them by altering the translation, he has explained them away by his notes. At least, be prevailed upon to take one of these. It is much more agreeable to many pilgrims than those you have. And, indeed, those you have, can never be of much use, for you can never understand them.

Th. I have not yet discovered any doctrines in my book which appear to me dishonorable to the Lord of the way, nor otherwise than comforting and encouraging to the true pilgrim. I say again, I am disposed to have nothing to do with these pretended improved versions. Come, brother, let us be going. Goodwill said to me, "take heed that no man deceive you." I think it safest not to listen to this stranger. He bid me, moreover, to "search the scriptures."

So saying he opened his book, and read towards the close of it; "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

So they left the man, and went on their way.

THE SAILOR'S DAUGHTER.

A sailor was asked what induced him first to attend to religion, and gave for answer the following narrative. I came from my last voyage before Christmas, and journeyed home. Being late when I arrived, I had not the opportunity of seeing my eldest girl, about six years of age, until the following day. At dinner time, when we had sat down, I began, (beast-like,) to eat what was before me; but glancing my eye towards this girl, of whom I was doatingly fond, I observed her to look at me with astonishment.—After a moment's pause, she asked me in a solemn and serious manner, 'Father, do you never ask a blessing before eating?' Her mother observed me to look hard at her, and hold my knife and fork motionless; (it was not anger—it was a rush of conviction, which struck me like lightning;) apprehending some reproof from me, and wishing to pass it by in a trifling way, she said, "Do you say grace Nanny." My eyes were still rivited upon the child for I felt conscious I had never instructed her to pray, nor even to set an example by praying with my family when at home. The child seeing me wait for her to begin, put her hands together, and lifting up her eyes to heaven, breathed the sweetest prayer I ever heard. This is too much for me: the knife and fork dropped from my hands, and I gave vent to my feelings in tears." Here a pause ensued. He appeared much affected. On recovering himself he continued, "I inquired who had thus instructed the child.—The mother informed me, the good people at the Mariners' Church next door, and the child never would go to bed, nor rise in the morning, without kneeling down to pray for herself and her dear father and mother. Ah!—thought I, and I never prayed for myself or my children. The Lord having awakened me to a sense of my danger through the instrumentality of a dear child, I am now truly happy in the thought that Jesus Christ came into the world to save poor sinners, of whom I am chief."

INTELLIGENCE.

Dr. Morrison recommends that a Floating Chapel be established near Canton, for the use of sailors. He says there are, about that place, 3000 English and American sailors, on an average, who have no means of religious instruction. Sea-Missionaries should be employed to labor in all seaports.

There are, on and about the river Thames, in London, about 120,000 persons connected with vessels and the sea; most of whom have, since 1817, been brought under the sound of the gospel by the labors of the Societies.

A Religious Tract Society, supported by various denominations of Christians, has been established within the past year at Calcutta in India, with encouraging prospects of success.

A letter has been received by a gentleman in Boston from the Rev. J. J. Carruthers, employed in the Crimea by the Scottish Missionary Society. The letter is dated August 7, 1824, and is accompanied by a journal written in 1823. The journal gives an account of the first Christian convert from among the Mahometans in the Crimea. At the latest date, Sept. 7, 1823, there were several inquirers, some of whom were very serious and attentive.

Mr. Erasmus H. Simon, a converted Jew, has published a circular stating his reasons for declining to reside on the farm at Westcher, N. York which has been leased by the American Jews Society for the purpose of a Jewish settlement. He has withdrawn from all connexion with the Board.

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SERMON.

JOHN, XVI, 8.—*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin.*

That man is a free agent, is a self evident proposition, an intuitive truth. I am not more certain, that I *exist*, than that I *will*, that I act, and that I choose, according to my pleasure. But while man is *free*, he is influenced by a divine power. While he chooses, and acts according to his choice, he is dependent on God for every thought. While he works out his own salvation himself, God works in him to will and to do. While exerting the most astonishing powers of mind, he is only more effectually moved by an unseen power.

Man acts and God acts, in the same operation of body and mind. In the most sublime flights of genius and science, when man numbers the stars, and weighs the planets, he is borne on the strong wing of divine power. "By the inspiration of the Almighty," man displays all the wonderful energy of his intellectual powers. Were the constant agency of God withdrawn, darkness and death, would close the light of the universe.—*How* this divine operation is consistent with human choice and human exertion, I do not know, how God constantly acts on the mind, and yet leaves man free and active, I do not know. Still I do know, that the facts are not the less certain. The Holy Spirit, saith the Savior, will reprove or rather convince* the world of sin that they are guilty, and exposed to the anger of God. This is his work. From the text and other passages, it is evident, that conviction of sin is one office of the Holy Spirit. The maxims of natural religion and the exercise of reason may teach a man that he has sinned. The same reasoning powers, which satisfy him respecting other facts, may instruct him here. But this superficial, indefinite impression of

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* See the translations of Thompson and Doddridge, and note of Wakefield.

evil will not effectually excite him to believe in the Savior, and lead a life of humility and repentance. A man who has enjoyed a life of perpetual health and gaiety of spirits, may believe that he is a frail, mortal, dying creature; but his convictions are slight, he will rarely submit to the cautious habits of his neighbor, who is pining under painful chronic disorders, and tortured with all the fears of a valetudinarian so great is the difference between the acknowledgements of reason, and the convictions of conscience, between human teaching, and that of the gospel, enforced by the Holy Spirit. Reason leaves the mind quiet and secure; the Spirit of God awakens the conscience to a deep sense of its sin, and guilt, and danger. The man sees his sin to be rebellion against God, an odious and abominable work, idolatry of self, putting self in the place of God. He discovers his danger; a dreadful sound is in his ears; Sinai thunders; his sentence is death; in the anguish of his spirit he cries, "What shall I do?"

But I ought to be more particular in enforcing the doctrine, that it is the office of the Holy Spirit to convince men of their wickedness.

This he does, not by a miracle, not by a new revelation, not by dreams or visions; but by the preaching of the gospel. This is the great engine of conviction and even of conversion "Faith cometh by hearing." But to proceed. Of what sins does the spirit of God convince men?

I. He convinces them of the sinfulness of their *immoral* actions. Tho' all men allow, that immoral actions are wrong, and perhaps have some slight impressions, that they are themselves guilty; yet if gospel truth be not impressed on the conscience, if the Holy Spirit have not reproved or convinced the mind, its sense of guilt is inconstant, indefinite, and superficial. Tho' the man has trampled on the laws of society: tho' he has broken the law of God; tho' he has injured his neighbor, violated his promise, betrayed the confidence of his friend, and disturbed the peace of the community, he often feels, but little remorse, little self reproach, little sense of guilt, or shame. Notwithstanding his violations of law human and divine, he often congratulates himself for his virtues, boasts of his goodness, and thanks God that he is so much more religious than his neighbors.

But when the Spirit of God comes, when the Spirit reproves or convinces him of sin, he perceives that his guilt is great, bold, and daring. He is ashamed and confounded; the plague of his heart, the sins of his life, are an overflowing fountain of moral poison. The streams have polluted the neighborhood; his example is abroad; he has encouraged others in their wickedness; he has grieved and afflicted others better than himself; he has made dangerous impressions, which he cannot efface, inflicted wounds in society, which he cannot heal, done a damage, which he cannot repair. His iniquities are as a pestilence, walking in darkness. He is ready to exclaim, "I perish; father, I have sinned."

II. The Holy Spirit convinces the conscience of the guilt of those actions which are *apparently* moral and good.

With all his sins, the man had, probably, done many things apparently, right and good; the worst man performs a multitude of such actions. He had been industrious. He had not been an angel of discord, a nuisance in society, the shame of his family; he had not blasphemed his God, nor slandered his friend. Temperate and sober, he had read his bible, and come to the house of God. In all these things, did he manifest any spiritual life, any love to God, any holy aspirations for the divine favor, any contrition of heart for sin? He came to the house of God, and so did the useful animal, which drew him in his carriage. But as neither of them had any pious motives, any faith in Christ, any principle of obedience, any regard to the glory of God, any holy desires for sanctifying mercy, they have no claim to the divine blessing, no title to the smallest reward.—The morality and religion of the man *had* been his pride, his hope, his confidence; but the Spirit of God has come and convinced him that these services rested on no proper basis, that they were excited by no religious motives, that they were heartless, cold and dead. He had been moral; but this was constitutional indifference, or the habit of education, or the slavish fear of punishment. He had been, apparently, religious; but this was to be seen of men, or to purchase heaven at the price of his prayers and sacrifices. The fear of God was not before his eyes, nor the love of God in his heart. In coming to the place of public worship, his heart was not in the duties, contemplated. True; he brought his body; but his heart was not here. So he might have sent his coat or cloak; but would this have made his garments religious, or given them a claim to the divine favor? In all these plausible services, he was governed by his own interest, his reputation, or his safety. The Spirit of God comes and convinces him of this truth. He, therefore, renounces his confidence in his own righteousness, his opinion of his own goodness, his flattering expectation of future reward. As he had no regard for God, he has no claim to his favor. He labored, not for God, but himself, and has received his reward. Instead of pride, he feels remorse instead of self complacency, he is smitten with terror; instead of delusive hope, his heart is sinking in despair. He is confounded in view of his best services, that he so disregarded his Maker, his Law, and his Gospel. The wisdom of the flesh, the best services of the selfish heart, are enmity against God. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Design or intention is essential to every moral action. As the moral character of the intention is, such is the action. When the intention is worldly or selfish, nothing morally good can be predicated of the action. The stream may as well rise above the fountain, or a bad tree bear good fruit, as an action sustain a character superior to the motive.—When the conscience is enlightened and convinced by the Spirit of God, this is clearly and impressively seen. How miserable is the man. He had thought himself wise and good; that he had kept his garden, and that the fruit was rich and abundant; but the shining of truth has scorched every flower, and blasted every plant. His gold has become dross; he is poor indeed.

III. The Holy Spirit enlightens the conscience, to see the sin of unbelief, the guilt of rejecting the Savior. "He shall convince the world of sin, because they *believe* not on me." No man can give proof of love or obedience to Christ, unless he cheerfully accept his favor. He, who disregards a proffered favor, grossly abuses the kindness of his benefactor. Not only the cheerful giver; but the cheerful receiver, is beloved of God; "to enjoy is to obey." Assistance in distress is precious in proportion to the distress; the wickedness of rejecting such resistance is correspondingly great.

Finding ourselves guilty, and judged, and condemned, and ruined, the salvation of the gospel ought to be welcomed by us with joy, thanksgiving and praise; its abundant grace and goodness ought to swell the heart with love, and faith and admiration; to satisfy, delight, and ravish the soul.

Yet obstinate unbelief, unmoved yields the pardon and redemption offered, disregards the gift of eternal blessedness, hardens the heart against the terrors of everlasting punishment, adds sin to transgression, till she wearies herself in committing iniquity. Unbelief denies the fact of our sinful and lost state; denies that we are dependent on the sovereign grace of God; that we have no help in ourselves; that we are forever destroyed, without an interest in the blood of atonement. Unbelief denies the necessity of the Savior's blood, with all the wonderful circumstances of redeeming love. She denies the insufficiency of her own righteousness, and the vanity of her worldly hopes. She refuses to make any preparation for a better world, for the departure of the soul from friends, from the means of salvation, for the day of judgment, or the unknown wonders of immortality. She sleeps away the summer of life, and in the winter of death awakes to misery and ruin.

This is the prominent sin, which the Holy Spirit impresses on the conscience. He reproves men because they believe not on Jesus Christ; because they neglect a Savior, so excellent and meritorious. Is not this a sin of a crimson die! Does it not argue an entire want of gratitude, and of every christian grace? Does it not show that the heart has no sense of divine goodness or mercy, no value for the redemption, which has been wrought, for the atonement, which has been made? Hard must be the heart, dark must be the mind, seared must be the conscience, which remains unmoved, unaffected, on hearing the gracious offers of redeeming love. This conviction the Holy Spirit fastens in the conscience, pierces the soul with the anguish of guilt. Unbelief is a sin of presumption—for soon it may be too late to believe; in a moment it may be too late to ask for mercy. Still, unbelief presumes to make light of heavenly glory, to trifle with immortal happiness, to treat God himself as false to his word, defying the thunders of his wrath, sporting with the torments of the damned. Is not unbelief a sin of desperation? It rejects the *only* remedy. There remaineth no other sacrifice for sin. Another foundation can no man lay. It is a refusal to perform the only act, which can save the soul; it is extinguishing the only light, which can guide us to glory; it is pouring on the ground the last drop from the cup of life; it is shivering the only plank, which will waft us over the Jordan of death.—No wonder then, that when the Holy Spirit convinces the conscience of such desperate wickedness and danger, it should wing the heart, and the soul should cry, "What shall I do."

IV. The Holy Spirit convinces the man of his opposition to the divine law.

In his previous superficial manners of contemplating religious subjects, he might consent, that the law was holy just and good.—Though he had sometimes, knowingly, violated its commands, still it was an object of his dread and veneration. He now learns, that he had not known himself, that respect and affection are not the feelings of his heart. His heart resists, his heart recoils from the law, as too strict in its commands, too dreadful in its sanctions. The lamp of divine truth has enlightened his mind; his disobedience and rebellion are made manifest. His professions of respect for the law vanish. Like Cain he cries, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Like Adam he wishes to hide himself from God. The harp and the viol are no longer pleasant; a merry song in such a solemn scene, only heightens his distress; his heart trembles; sometimes his limbs shake with terror while the Law thunders "cursed be every one, who continues not in all things, written in the law to do them." He has learned that the law is not obeyed by external observance without the heart.—He has not kept the law. It condemns him in every sentence. He can echo the words of the Psalmist, "Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts?" "My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread." Sometimes the intellect is distracted, and he may again repeat the words of David.—"While I suffer thy terrors, I am disturbed." Say, my friends, have you not seen this picture? Have not *your* minds been agitated, like the troubled sea? Often, such are the effects by the divine Spirit.

V. The Spirit of God convinces man of his opposition to divine sovereignty, to providence, and the government of God.

By the sovereignty of God, I do not mean any supposed *arbitrary* proceedings, which do not rest on reason and wisdom for their basis. By the sovereignty of God, I intend that independence of wisdom by which he does all his pleasure, and gives not account of any of his matters. Nothing more is or can be intended by any rational christian, than that wisdom of power by which God made and governs the world. He made one star to differ from another in glory. One is beautiful to the naked eye; another can be seen only by a powerful telescope. Angels are more glorious than men. Men differ in genius, in science, in felicity, and honor. One is enlightened and sanctified, and seems to walk with angels, on the threshhold of heaven. One is rich and riots in pleasure. Another is poor, and ignorant, and vicious, a brother of dragons, and a child of wrath. One is a savage; another is a saint. The kingdom of God ruleth over all, and of the same lump forms one vessel to honor and another to dishonor.—"Not so," exclaims the aspiring heart of man. "Why doth he yet find fault?" "I know thee to be a hard master." "Thy ways are not equal."

In the days of Naaman many lepers were in Israel; yet none were selected by God to be healed but this great man. In the time of Elijah many widows were in Israel, the holy land, inhabited by the people of God; yet to none of these was the prophet sent to supply with provision and to relieve from distress; but he was sent to a widow of Zarephath, a pagan region, north from the confines of Israel. When Jesus Christ exhibited these facts, to illustrate the sovereignty of God, and to justify himself, for not performing his usual miracles at Nazareth, the people were provoked to to madness, drove him from the synagogue, and would have hurled him from the precipice which was near their city.

In his sovereign wisdom, God chose Jocob and rejected Esau.—Nor am I unwilling to gratify the opponents of the doctrine, by extending this *choice* to the *descend-*

ants of Jacob and Esau, for this instead of confining it to one solitary instance, is multiplying the displays of Divine sovereignty to myriads, and millions, and millions of examples. Their wisdom and prudence in such a construction of the history, I could never *divine.* With whom did God take counsel when he passed by all the sages of the law, all the military Chieftains, and from the pastures of Bethlehem, elevated David to the throne of Israel?

While living in pleasure, and regardless of religious truth, a man supposes himself friendly to the divine government, and reconciled to the sovereignty of God; but when "the spirit of God comes" "sin revives" "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." When the holy Spirit strives, man for the first time, perhaps, discovers his alienation from God. He finds himself unwilling, that the purpose of God should be executed, that he should do all his pleasure, that his counsel should stand. He knows, that he does not cordially say, "Not my will, but thine be done." He does not rejoice that God reigns, that he is himself dependent, as the staff in the hand of him, who walketh with it.—He is not willing that God should make rich and make poor, that he should choose some to life and leave others in the shadow of death. He complains, he resists, he struggles, like a prisoner in chains; like him he is dependent.

VI. The Spirit of God convinces men of their opposition to the gospel.

The gospel is glad tidings. It is so received by all, who feel rightly or act well. The gospel presents a redemption already accomplished. "Propitiation" for sin has been made. The blood of atonement has been accepted; yet wicked men, bent on establishing a righteousness of their own, refuse this invaluable favor. From such immense obligations; from such entire and absolute dependance, the heart revolts. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life; how shall I render myself *worthy* the favor of God; how shall I claim the glory of heaven," is the enquiry of the heart.

That the gospel is not acceptable to the wicked is overwhelmingly evident from the incontrovertible facts, that a great portion of the world have rejected the gospel, and where it is most clearly unfolded, only a small portion, cordially embrace its doctrines, or obey its precepts. The lowest condition of gospel mercy is *repentance.* All the self love, all the pride, all the obstinacy of the depraved heart, rise up against this duty.—To repent is to be humble. In repenting the man judges and condemns himself. What can be more abhorrent to the heart. Enlightened by the spirit of God, the man discovers this self complacency and self-dependance, this reluctance to repent and trust in the mercy of God, this unwillingness to be indebted to God himself for pardon and salvation.

With all the grace which it reveals the gospel requires men to be holy themselves. To be saved they must be conformed to the Savior. Like him they must deny themselves, be humble and meek, devout and charitable; yet all this will not be admitted as the meritorious cause of their salvation. However, profitable as servants, they have been, they have done no more than their duty, they have conferred no favor.—Here, again, the heart complains. "It is a vain thing to call upon God." The conscience, enlightened by the divine Spirit, perceives this restless, complaining temper. The gospel requires obedience; yet demands acceptance as a free gift; it rejects mere external services, requiring faith and holiness of heart; it offers reward of grace and not of debt. This seems hard to the aspiring heart; the gracious gospel seems not a gospel of grace; but a system of hard sayings. Hence so many Laborers in the vineyard of the Lord find their message rejected, and utter the melancholy complaint, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

VII. The Spirit of God convinces men of their aversion to the glories of heaven.

No doubt men, generally believe, that they desire and long for the joys of heaven; that they take delight in the goodness of God; that they love him as a father, and cordially obey him as a master. Many are shocked at the suggestion, that they are the enemies of God. But when the Spirit of God enlightens the conscience, their opinion is changed. Contemplating the divine Being, his holiness, and justice, and power, the man discovers the contrariety of character, the opposition of moral feelings, and that he could not be happy in his immediate presence. Carefully considering the employments of heaven, he is conscious, they would be irksome and tedious. Distinctly, recollecting, who constitutes the society of heaven, saints and angels, he is sure, they would not be the companions of his choice. From such friends, he turns away, having no sympathy in the topics of their converse, no harmony with their dispositions. Mingling in such society, engaging in such employment, under the eye of the holy God, would never rouse his active powers, never awaken the raptures of his heart, never swell the highest notes of his song.

He flies from such a place.—Whither shall he go? Whither turn himself for help and comfort? What shall he do? Gladly would he remain in this world; gladly would he enjoy his immortality in this vale of tears; but here, he cannot stay. The sentence has been pronounced; the wages of sin is death; his moments are flying, his sands are falling; the king of terrors is approaching; his grave is opening.

Looking forward, he exclaims, "Who can dwell with devouring fire, with everlasting burnings?" He clings to life, his cup of anguish is full; no sorrow is like his sorrow. Now, if ever, he bows, he yields himself a willing captive of divine mercy. Sin revived; and he dies.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. We see why men prefer false doctrines to true, a system of error to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The first process in the influence of truth is painful. The first effect of truth is to turn the attention of man to himself, to his own heart, his own moral character.

Truth draws the curtain from the naked heart. The lamp of divine truth illumines the dark caverns of the mind, makes manifest its wicked dispositions. The man is disappointed concerning himself; he sinks in his own estimation; he is not so good, so secure, as he had believed himself to be. This is painful, humbling, distressing; he turns away; he recoils from such a view, he wishes for "another gospel." The gospel of Christ requires holiness; it does not accommodate itself to our wishes or passions; but error is indefinitely various; assumes every hue; may be adapted to every taste, to every complexion of human character. God may be represented as all mercy, and a holy life a course of pleasant indulgencies.—Heaven may be described as a Mahometan Paradise, a region of perpetual spring, of flowery gardens, and melodious song. The burning lake, whose fires will never be quenched, may be represented, as a transient discipline, or its name and existence* may be denied, as the dismal creations, the unreal phantoms, of a disturbed imagination. With such pictures what eye, never suffused with the tears of repentance, would not be pleased? Who, that yet rolls sin, as a sweet morsel under his tongue, would not be better pleased with the imaginary gospel, than the real; with the opinions of men, than with the revelation from God? Where then is the wonder that the Teacher of false principles should be more popular, more caressed, more admired, and better rewarded, than he who announces the humbling gospel of Jesus, and calls on men to repent, and trust in a crucified Savior for eternal life; men prefer what gives them present pleasure; false religion has this effect; it produces a spirit of repose and slumber, tho' in the end it will be more terrible than the fiery serpents of the Arabian desert. Still would they submit to the convictions of the Holy Spirit, tho' alarmed and distressed for a moment, they might be enlightened and sanctified, comforted and delighted; the very gospel of Christ would become their support, their hope, their joy, their glory.

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*See Balfour's Inquiry.

2. The subject leads us to distinguish between mere terrors of conscience, and conviction of sin by the spirit of God. This is an error not uncommon men imagine they have experienced the influences of the Holy Spirit in a remarkable manner; because they have been alarmed, and their affections powerfully moved. For a time they were concerned; they were distressed; they wept, and refused to be comforted. It may reasonably be expected, that where the doctrine of future punishment is believed, that pathetic and terrible descriptions of its miseries, that terrible events of Providence, or even the self reproach of daring sin, will produce such effects on a feeling heart and a tender conscience; but here may be nothing spiritual, nothing religious, any more than in the tears of a tragedy, or the terrors of an earthquake. Yet many individuals, and perhaps some whole sects, on account of such animal affections, believe that they have in a remarkable degree the influences of the Holy Spirit. Hence are adopted all the modes of excitement, which art or enthusiasm can invent, alarming the fears, rousing the terrors, inflaming the passions, and bewildering the imagination, by affecting tones, by violent vociferation, by terrific descriptions of the moving scene, round a dying bed, or the pomp and splendors of the great day, the descending Judge, the sounding trump, the rising dead, & all the horrors of everlasting burnings. By such addresses anxiety and fear are awakened; but is the judgement informed? The passions are moved; but is the conscience convinced? The heart is palsied with terror; but is the understanding enlightened. The winds blow and the rocks are rent; but do you hear one whisper of the Holy Spirit?

Truth is the medium of divine operations; the Holy Spirit breathes in the gentle voice of gospel doctrine, convincing the soul of sin; because the Savior is rejected, his laws disobeyed.—Hence may we learn to distinguish between the disturbance of the passions, and the convictions of the conscience by the Holy Spirit. Mere excitement passes away, like the brook of a summer's shower, having produced only a temporary reformation, resulting from agitation and distress. The Divine Spirit is permanent in his effects, as the shining of the sun, increasing like the river of the distant mountains, conveying comfort, cheerfulness, joy and glory.

We learn from the subject, why so many persons deny the doctrine of man's depravity; why so many never view themselves so wicked, as this subject represents them to be.

The Spirit of God has not convinced them; his light has not illumined their minds. Having some information from various other sources, they confess, they are not precisely what they ought to be, that they are not what they wish to be, that they are very imperfect. But they have no belief, nor conception of such dark depravity of being altogether in sin; of being the enemies of God, of his law, his gospel, and government. Probably, this arises from a want of perfect self knowledge, from not being enlightened and convinced by the holy Spirit; for sometimes, these very persons without having fallen into any new course of sin, and without being guilty of any glaring immorality, change their opinions respecting themselves, and make as humble, as abasing confessions of sin and guilt, as any men in the world.—Such was Saul of Tarsus. As to the law blameless, he lived in all good conscience. But when the commandment came, when the Spirit of God enlightened his conscience, he found himself the the chief of sinners. In the extreme guilt and remorse, and self reproach of his heart, he cries out, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Had not the holy Spirit enlightened his mind, he might have continued to justify himself, denying that depravity of heart, which myriads feel and confess. When those, who reject this doctrine shall experience as deep and powerful convictions as St. Paul, then may they like him bemoan their guilt and danger.—Till then they may feel themselves as good as the young man, who came to Jesus Christ to be directed in the way to heaven. He had not openly violated the commands of God; and therefore concluded, that he had obeyed them, according to their spirit and design. So do they. He, in consequence of his supposed goodness, considered himself prepared for the kingdom of heaven. So do they. But when the Spirit of God comes, when the torch of divine truth enlightens the dark recesses of their minds; when they discover the spirituality and extent of the divine law; when they see it extending to their secret thoughts, their wishes, their inclinations, and motives, then will they learn the plague of their own hearts, the crimson depravity of their lives.

4. If the Spirit of God produces such sense of guilt, is it strange if they seek relief and comfort from every means, which may flatter their hopes.

The pressure of great distress is ever unfavorable to correct judgment, and sound discretion. Too much weight or pressure on a machine impedes its wonted operations; so the burdened mind doesnot turn and examine evidence with its usual prudence and sagacity. As frost stops the current of a river; so intense anguish abstracts the course of thought, the proper movements of the mind.

When the Spirit of God comes, with efficacy and power, the anxiety and distress are often violent and terrible. The person sees a naked human heart; he sees himself. No wonder then, that he reads, and hears, and prays, and enquires the way of every man he meets; that he explores every avenue of hope, and knocks at every door of escape. The pressure of his anxious fears and terrors rack and disorder the understanding, and relief is sometimes sought without much discretion or judgment. Like the Psalmist he may almost say, " While I suffer thy terrors I am *distracted.*"

A conviction of guilt, a sense of danger, a fear of divine wrath, an overwhelming apprehension of everlasting misery, produces probably, the most insupportable agony the mind of man ever endures in this world. No terror is like this terror; no misery is like this misery. Is it very strange then, that such persons should seek relief by every means, which accident may present, or fancy conceive? Is it very strange if sometimes, they " heap to themselves Teachers," and listen to bold declaimers, boasting of visions and revelations; Is it strange if sometimes they embrace the opiate of error and delusion, to quiet the anguish of a troubled conscience?

Let all such afflicted souls share in your christian sympathy, your faithful advice, and your fervent prayers.

5. If such be the terrors of conviction; no wonder the soul is joyful, when first delivered, when first she experiences the consolation of hope, and the Spirit of adoption.

When the soul, shut up to the faith, first bends and bows to the authority of God, when the heart embraces him as her father, her Savior, and her portion, slavish terrors vanish, faith lifts her eye, hope kindles delight; peace and joy enlivens the heart. Instead of resistance and rebellion, the heart yields itself resigned to the will of God; instead of striving and struggling against Omnipotence; she casts her burden upon the Lord, and looks to him for all she desires.

The dark cloud is gone from Sinai; the Sun of righteousness shines; the thunders are silent; the lightnings cease to blaze; the earth no longer trembles; the heart no longer quakes with terror. A feeble hope, that God is reconciled; a weak faith in Jesus Christ; faint evidence of salvation sheds tranquility and peace on the soul. " Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Well may such a soul say, " The Lord hath done great things, for which I am glad. Come, all ye, who fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I sought the Lord and he heard me and has not put my soul to shame. I have sown in tears; I reap in joy." Is this reality; or am I like them, who dream? What shall I render to the Lord; for all his benefits? Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord forever and ever. Amen.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN A LIBERAL AND AN ORTHODOX PROFESSOR OF RELIGION.

Liberal. Well Mr. the world in a moral sense in evidently growing better.

Orthodox. The truth of your proposition depends on the meaning, which you attach to your terms. If by growing better, you mean, that the civil and social rights of persons and nations are better understood and more generally regarded than in former ages, your proposition is doubtless true. But if the divine law be your standard of goodness, it may be difficult to prove that the world is any better now than it was 1800 years ago.

Lib. Yes. It may be easily proved, that there is more religion in the world than formerly.

Or. It is hoped that the number of the truly pious is increasing; but that the impenitent or those who have not been born again have any more religion cannot be made to appear.

Lib. The impenitent, as you call them, 1800 years ago persecuted Christ and his disciples, and during many succeeding ages, cruel wars were waged and punishments inflicted on account of religious opinion. We live in an age of charity. Men of different systems and denominations meet as friends and live as brethren.—We do not settle our religious controversies at the point of the sword. Different sects cultivate peace and good will and generally are willing to grant that good men may be found in all denominations. The prevalence of this catholic spirit is to me conclusive evidence that the world is growing better and that the millennium is begun.

Or. There is cause of gratitude, that we live in an age when the principles of religious toleration are better understood than by our ancestors. That catholic spirit among members of different denominations, which you consider conclusive evidence that there is more religion in the world, may however proceed from indifference to all religion, as from a false religion. It is granted, that were men what they ought to be, persecution would be unknown among them. Yet I think there are two facts clearly established in the history of past ages, which do away the force of your conclusions. First, Persecution is most likely to manifest itself, when true religion is set in opposition to false religion. Secondly, That catholic spirit which consists in believing that good men may be found in all denominations, generally prevails either among the followers of a false religion or among those who are indifferent to all religion. Paul did not preach your doctrine.—Had he told the Greek, the Roman and the Jew, "I believe there are good men in all your denominations, I do not come to condemn you, or to say, you must be damned if you continue in the belief and worship of idols, I am only come to shew you the way of God more perfectly;" there would probably have been no persecution. But Paul told them, that there is only one name given under heaven among men by which any can be saved; and the declaration of this truth brought forth the hatred and persecution of the world.

The Greeks and Romans are supposed to have admitted the existence of more than 2000 gods, yet there were no persecutions among them; because, like you, they conceded that the worshipper of one god was equally pious and equally in the way of his duty, as the worshipper of another god. It was not until the claims of christianity to be the only true religion were urged in opposition to their idol worship that they began to persecute and to destroy. The truth is, the world are naturally disposed to support religion, if they may have a religion of their own choice. It is only the true religion, which teaches man's entire dependance on God's mercy, that provokes the enmity of the world. Permit me to illustrate this for a moment.—When the Jews of the captivity were about to rebuild the temple, their adversaries came to them and said, "Let us build with you: for we seek your god as ye do and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-Haddan king of Assur which brought us up hither." Now had the Jews possessed that catholick spirit, which you esteem the glory of our age, a union would have been formed between them and their enemies. But, because they contended that salvation was only of the Jews, their enemies became their persecutors. Herod the king, we are told, did many things, and heard John gladly. Had not John reproved his wickedness, his conduct towards him would have been liberal and friendly; but for his faithfulness he caused him to be put to death. The people of Galilee were glad when they knew that Jesus had arrived among them. They had heard of his mighty works in other cities, and hoped to see a display of his power in their city. Had Christ gratified their curiosity, they would have praised him: but, because he told them of God's sovereignty, they were all filled with wrath and they led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. From these remarks, it is conceived, that a candid person must admit, that it is easy to awaken the opposition, and easy to secure the praise and friendship of the world. To awaken the one, you need only preach the same doctrine which Ezra and Paul and John and Christ have preached: and to secure the other you have only to allow the world the privilege of being righteous in their own way, and on their own terms. Make the way of life as straight and narrow as Christ has made it, and you will suffer persecution. Make it as broad as the adversaries of the Jews and the Galileans made it, and as the impenitent of our day want to make it, and the world will have no controversy with you on account of your religion.

Lib. What then, would you consider satisfactory evidence of the moral and religious improvement of the world?

Or. I confess that I have no confidence in that kind of union, and harmony which grows out of the admission, that men may believe in different and opposing systems of religion; that they may travel in different and opposite directions, and yet be equally right and equally secure of heaven. This is the old beaten path of heathen Greece and heathen Rome. Though I freely acknowledge that in minor points, even among good men, a difference of opinion may be supposed to exist; yet with my bible in my hand, I must contend, that he only that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. With these views of divine truth, I shall have evidence that the religious state of the world is improving, when the doctrines of the Gospel are more generally understood, more cordially believed, and more generally carried into practice, than in former ages. You may talk of harmony, of union and of charity forever; but if they grow not out of a cordial and firm belief of the essential doctrines of revelation, they are as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

NOLENS.

For the Christian Magazine.

An Exposition of I. Peter, III. 19—20.

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which some time were disobedient, when once the the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Various and opposite interpretations have been given of this portion of inspired truth. It has by some been supposed to inculcate sentiments, which, it is believed, are no where inculcated in the inspired volume. The importance of having a correct understanding of it must, therefore, be apparent. To unfold its real meaning, is the design of the following remarks.

1. Who *were* the spirits in prison, to whom Christ went and preached?—It is evident from the passage before us, that they were spirits of persons, who lived on the earth, before the universal deluge. "By which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Since those spirits, to which Christ preached, are here said to have been disobedient in the days of Noah, it is evident, they were spirits of persons who lived on the earth, before the flood.

2. *How* did Christ preach to the spirits in prison?—Through inattention to the connexion, many

have supposed, that he preached to them himself in person. The Apostle, however, does not say, that Christ *personally* preached to the spirits in prison, but that he preached to them *instrumentally*, by the Spirit. The reader will perceive this, by simply turning his eye to the preceding verse, and observing the manner in which it is connected with the passage now the subject of remark. "Being put to death in the flesh, *but quickened by the Spirit*, *by which* he went and preached to the spirits in prison." Here it is plainly asserted, that Christ was quickened by the Spirit, *by which*, that is, *by which Spirit*, the same Spirit, by which he was quickened, he preached to the spirits in prison. The relative pronoun *which*, at the beginning of the passage, that is the subject of exposition, refers immediately back to the term *Spirit*, the last word in the preceding verse, and thus renders it certain, that Christ did not *personally* preach to the spirits in prison, as many, through inattention, have supposed, but *instrumentally* by the Spirit, as the medium of communication.

3. *When* did he preach to them instrumentally, by the Spirit?—It is the opinion of those, who suppose that Christ *personally* preached to the spirits in prison, that the *time*, when this occurred, was immediately after his crucifixion, during the period, when his body lay in the sepulchre. It is supposed, that he then descended into the prison of hell, and personally preached to the spirits of the antediluvians, which were then and there confined. This opinion however, is gratuitously assumed, as is evident from the fact, that to the spirits in prison, Christ did not himself personally preach. And there are circumstances, which render it altogether improbable, that the time, when he preached to them *instrumentally by the Spirit*, was the time, that intervened between his death and resurrection. Why should he have employed the Spirit to preach to them, *at that particular time?*—Should it be admitted, that the Spirit preached to the spirits in prison, *at that particular time*, it is certain, that no mention is made in the Bible of his having preached to them *at any other time*, since they have been there confined. And surely no satisfactory reason can be given, why Christ should have employed the Spirit to preach to them, during the three days, that intervened between his death and resurrection, and at no other time, since their imprisonment.

On the supposition, that the Spirit of Christ preached to the spirits in prison, at the time supposed, it may be further asked, why he preached only to the spirits of the antediluvians? Were those, who perished in the waters of the deluge, the only persons, who, at the time of the crucifixion of Christ, had gone down to people the prison of despair? This cannot be admitted. The

Bible warrants the belief, that multitudes went down to the prison of hell, during the time, which elapsed, between the flood and the death of Christ. The question, then, returns, why did the Spirit of Christ preach to the spirits of the antediluvians only? Why did he not also preach to their companions in guilt and suffering? That he should have done this, seems no less desirable and important, than that he should have preached to the spirits of the antediluvians. Their fellow-prisoners were no less guilty, than themselves, no less stood in need of forgiveness.

But when, it may be asked, did Christ, by the Spirit, preach to the spirits in prison, if not during the time, that intervened between his death and resurrection? I answer—when they lived on the earth before the deluge. That the Spirit actually strove with men, at that time, is a scriptural truth. In immediate reference to them, it is written in Genesis.—"The Lord said; My spirit shall not always strive with man."—This may be regarded as the language of the second Person in the Trinity; and thus regarded, it naturally leads us to conclude, that the time, when Christ employed the spirit to preach to the antediluvians, was, when they resided on the earth. As to the particular method, by which he, at that time, preached to them by the Spirit, he appears to have sent the Spirit to incline Noah to fore warn them of the approaching deluge and exhort them to repentance.—In his second epistle, Peter denominates Noah, "A preacher of righteousness." And in the passage, which is the subject of exposition, he says—"the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing."—There is, therefore, good reason to conclude, that, during the hundred and twenty years which were employed by Noah in building the ark, he ceased not to preach righteousness, to the people of the day in which he had earnestly entreated them to repent without delay. Thus to preach to them, during that period, he must have been inclined by the Spirit. If, then, we carefully consider, what has now been stated; if we consider, that it was the antediluvians, to whom Christ went and preached that he did not preach to them himself, personally, but instrumentally by the Spirit—that it is altogether improbable, the Spirit preached to them during the time, which intervened between the death and the resurrection of Christ—that the Spirit actually strove with them, and inclined Noah to preach righteousness to them, while they abode on the earth before the deluge we can hardly fail to conclude, that it was indeed, before the universal deluge, that Christ went and preached to them by his Spirit.

I am not insensible, it may be objected, that the apostle says, Christ "went and preached to the spirits in prison," thus plainly conveying the idea, that they were in prison at the time, when he preached to them. To this objection I reply, that Peter does not say, the spirits were *actually in prison, at the time*, when Christ preached to them by the Spirit. He necessarily says no more, than that they were in prison. at the time, when he wrote his first epistle. He knew, they were in prison, at that particular time.—Hence, with strict propriety, he spake of them as being then in prison; while his language specifies no particular time, when Christ preached to them by the Spirit. That time must consequently be ascertained by other circumstances. And all other circumstances concur in proving, that the time, when Christ, by the Spirit preached to the spirits of the antediluvians, in prison in the time of the apostle Peter, was—the time of their residence on the earth, before the deluge.

4. What was the character of those, to whom, in the passage before us, Christ is said to have preached by the Spirit? They were "sometime disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water." Their disobedience they manifested *by the notorious wickedness of their lives.* It is written of them, that they corrupted their way on the earth and that through them it was filled with violence. Of the character of the true God, and of what he required of them, they were not necessarily ignorant. There is reason to believe, that, from time to time, God made known his character and will to them by means of special revelations from heaven. Yet, closing their eyes against the light that shone around them, and bidding defiance to the authority of God, they set at naught his counsels and despised his reproofs.—Their disobedience they further manifested by their unbelief. What God declared to Noah, and through him to them, they would not believe. With the fact, that Noah was preparing the ark, they must have been well acquainted. Indeed, in the manual labour of building the ark many of them must have been engaged. And there can be no doubt, but that Noah distinctly informed them for what purpose he was preparing the ark, and expressed to them his entire confidence, that the event of the universal deluge would occur at the appointed time. Him, however, they did not, nor would, believe. Though they doubtless, supposed him to be sincere in his expectation of an approaching deluge, yet, they, probably, regarded him as a weak enthusiast, and made him the general object of ridicule and contempt.

They again manifested their spirit of disobedience by not being persuaded to repent. Since

Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" to them; he doubtless, used with them the most cogent and persuasive arguments to induce them to repent, and prepare for the awful event that awaited them. They would not however, be persuaded. They continued to rebel against God, and to ripen themselves for destruction, till, at length, they had filled up the full measure of their iniquities. They continued to buy and sell, to marry and give in marriage, till the day on which Noah entered into the ark. Then the windows of heaven were opened, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the rain, in torrents, began and continued to descend, till the tops of the highest mountains were covered. As the consequence, those, to whom Christ by his Spirit, had preached, were drowned in the depths of the flood, and their immortal spirits immediately entered the prison of despair.

In view of the preceding exposition we may learn the error of those, who deny, that there will be any punishment in the future world. It was not till within comparatively a few years, that any, who professed to admit the plenary inspiration of the Bible, presumed to deny, that there will be any future punishment. That the wicked will receive no degree of punishment beyond the present life, is however, a favourite opinion with many at the present day, who do still pretend to receive the Bible as the word of God. They suppose that mankind receive in the present world, all the punishment for their sins, which they deserve, and, therefore, that whenever any person is removed from this world by death, he is immediately received into a state of happiness in heaven. That this opinion is erroneous, is rendered evident by what is asserted in the passage at the head of this article, concerning the inhabitants of the old world, which perished in the waters of the deluge. They are denominated, "*the spirits in prison*," and are represented to have been in prison, at the time, when Peter composed his first epistle. Inasmuch, therefore, as at that time, the souls of those, who perished in the waters of the deluge, were confined in prison, they were to say the least, in a state of suffering. And the fact, that they were then in such a state, strikingly manifests the error of those, who suppose, that the wicked will receive no degree of punishment in the future world.

Nothing can be inferred from the passage, of which an exposition has now been given in favor of the doctrine of a final restoration.

It is the opinion of not a few at the present day, that there will be a final restoration. It is supposed that when the wicked shall have suffered in the prison of hell, some for a larger, and some for a shorter period, according to their deeds done in the body, they will all be restored to the favour of God, and be made happy in heaven. They found this opinion on various passages of the Bible, of which that at the head of this article is one in their view of no inconsiderable importance. They infer from it, that immediately on his giving up the ghost on the cross, Christ descended into the prison of hell, and between that event, and the event of his resurrection, personally preached to the unhappy spirits of the antediluvians there confined. And for what purpose, it is asked, did Chirst preach to the spirits in prison, if not, that they might be persuaded to repent and believe in him to the salvation of their souls? If it were a fact, that Christ really descended, at the time supposed, into the prison of hell, and preached to the spirits in prison, the fact would afford some countenance to the system of universal restoration.—But the real fact is far different. Christ did not *personally* preach to the spirits in prison, but *instrumentally* by the Spirit. The time, when he preached to them by the Spirit, was not between his death and resurrection—but when they lived on the earth. Then he caused his Spirit to strive with them, and to incline Noah to inform them of the approaching deluge, and warn them to prepare to meet their God in peace. Nothing, therefore can be inferred from the passage before us in favour of the doctrine of universal restoration.

Though God is long-suffering toward sinners, yet, his vengeance will not sleep forever. He is, indeed, long-suffering toward them, not willing, that they should perish, but should come to repentance and a saving knowledge of the truth. But from the fact of his long-suffering toward them, they are sometimes ready to infer that his vengeance will never overtake them, though they continue to walk in the sight of their own eyes, and after the imagination of their own hearts. "Where inquire they, is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." We learn, however, that, though God, in long-suffering, waits on sinners, that they may repent, yet, if they refuse to repent, his vengeance will surely overtake them. It overtook the inhabitants of the antediluvian world. For a hundred and twenty years, while the ark was preparing, the long-suffering of God waited for them to repent and be saved. But his patience at length ceased to be exercised. His vengeance overtook them, and, in a most awful manner, hurried them to a miserable eternity. Let sinners, then, cease to abuse the patience of God. Let them never infer from the fact of his long-suffering toward them, that though they continue impenitent, his vengeance will never overtake them. Think, sinner, of the spirits of the antediluvians in the prison of hell. They once enjoyed the day and the means of grace, and might have made their peace with God. But with them it is now too late. For many hundred years, they have already been in the prison of dispair; nor will they ever be released, except to be united with their bodies, and to hear the sentence of final condemnation. Think, then, of them, and let the thought excite you to escape, from the wrath to come.

F.

RESTRAINTS ON DEPRAVITY.

In the natural heart there is no holy affection. In our earliest moral actions that same spirit appears which withered the bloom of paradise. Had man been left to its full and unrestrained influence, the guilt and woe even of his earthly cup would have been without mixture. The kind Father of our spirits has given us however, some amiable traits, which, though destitute of the holiness of the child of light, constitute all the loveliness of the child of darkness.

Our object in the following remarks is to illustrate some of these principles, which tend to prevent men from acting out the full and terrible tendency of their native depravity.

One of these restraints the noblest in nature, yet in effect the least energetic, is gratitude.—The heart has naturally no affections which rival this in its resemblance to holiness. Yet as it springs from selfishness, and reaches not that love "which seeketh not her own," it implies no holy affections. Selfishness is to benevolence, what matter is to spirit. Matter though purified and brightened is matter still; motionless of itself, thoughtless, and as perishable as ever. Thus gratitude is selfishness in its most amiable and mildest form. It is not then benevolence; it is not holiness. He that feels it not, is unholy indeed, and he that feels it, may be unholy also. As a restraint on our depravity however, its operation is strong and extensive.—It has curbed the thief in his guilty career, the avenger in his madness, the assassin in his deed of darkness, and the traitor in effecting his deep planned ruin. It has prompted both the receiver and the benefactor, to new, honorable, and strenuous exertions. Its power is, however, limited, and is often too feeble to cope with the strong bias of the heart, when she goeth out after her inclinations.

Another restraint is the voice of sympathy. Contrasted with what we esteem our own interest the good of others is disregarded, however much it surpasses them in value. Hence comes the oppression of the weak by the powerful: the reluctance of the debtor and the barbarity of the creditor. Hence the pride and the unfaithfulness so often manifested, the dishonesty of some and the indolence of others. Yet these with all their countless companions are only the faint images of what man would exhibit, were it not for the influence of sympathy. To her in the form of pity, sorrow owes many kind alleviations, and virtue ascribes many of her triumphs.—To thee, angel of consolation, may the wretched appeal for peace and hope and comfort. To thee, the social circle owes its charms, and friendship her strong and tender influence. Woe to him who heeds not thy persuasions: he hath already leagued with hell, & hath covenanted with the children of darkness. Yet even this restraint fails when the heart rises up to do its own deeds: then even the tear of sympathy is dried up and her kind sigh is stifled.

A third restraint is the impulse of natural affection. The parents anxiously watch over their son in the spring-time of his life: and, if poor, are prompted to industry, the source of many virtues; if rich, to the preservation of their property, and the direction of his education. The son, conscious of his obligation to honor and love them, yields obedience, and early learns to venerate their authority. If as he advances in life, he enters the paths of vice, he often weeps at the memory of his afflicted parents, and curses, yea bitterly curses his first dereliction. If he has energy of mind, these reflections may produce a reformation: if not, they will come again and again, and reproach him till his heart has ceased to feel, or his days on earth are finished. This restraint, universal in its operation, and almost as strong as it is universal, is emphatically styled the voice of nature.

Another, and still stronger restraint, is the love of character.—The degree of its influence varies with the fashionable standard of moral excellence; and this standard is derived from the fashionable religion. In lands shrouded in pagan darkness, the rules of morality are loose; and therefore he that wishes to be called good, needs but little exertion. Hence, supposing the love of character, as strong among these nations, as among those blest with a better system of faith, still as it needs not aim so high, its power of restraint will be less efficacious.—The system of Mahomet who copied some of his precepts from the Bible, holds up perhaps a more elevated standard than most of the Pagan systems. Hence we find the moral character of Mahometans less degraded than the generality of Pagans. If we look at Christianity, we find a holier faith, a more elevated standard, and a less vicious community.—If pursuing the search, we look at the different sects of this religion, we find that virtue still rises in proportion to the purity of their principles. Compare for instance the Protestant with the Catholic; the character of those who believe in an endless punishment, with that of those who do not: those, advocating the necessity of a radical change of heart, with those who do not: those holding to disinterested love with those who deny its existence: the distinction of their moral character still continues corresponding to the difference in their religious doctrines.—Hence it is evident, that the influence of a love of character, varies with the prevailing standard of moral excellence. Yet, however this influence may vary, one thing is certain—it is strong in governing our plans and conduct. It gives valor to the soldier, wisdom to the legislator, honesty to the man of business, and eloquence to the public speaker. When man sinks below this regard, he has gone far, very far, in the road to ruin; but when from a pure and holy regard to duty, he rises above it, he becomes a Christian.

A fifth restraint, which seems indeed to embrace the last mentioned, is the hope of reward.—This prompts to the exercise of many virtues. In a well regulated community he that aspires to offices of honor and emolument, must be careful that no flagrant vice be known to blemish his character. He that would acquire wealth must be frugal, honest and industrious, and these qualities will forbid a course of dissipation. The hope of reward has indeed often spurred men on to deeds of the blackest dye. As often too it has lifted them up to honor and glory. Its common influence, is favorable to the general interests of civil society. Often it has foiled the charm of temptation, and curbed the strength of unholy passions.

The last and most effectual restraint, however, is the fear of punishment. When the voice of gratitude is hushed, when the impulse of sympathy is feeble, and natural affection fails when the love of character, and the hopes of reward are lost; then nothing but the fear of some sure and terrible punishment, will hold the heart from rushing on in all the might of its awful depravity.—Happily for the world, few can throw off all these restraints, else all the peace of earth would vanish, and the boasted dignity of man would be told of no more forever. There would be no smile to light up the aspect of woe, nothing to beautify this vale of tears.

If the above representation be just, then man is not wronged by the assertion, that, while unregenerate, he has no real goodness.—So much sometimes appears that is amiable in the conduct of the unrenewed, that some have been led to say; it is impossible that such can be destitute of all that is holy. Yet, looking at the power of these restraints, shall we not rather wonder that man can exhibit so much iniquity: wonder at the depths of that depravity, which can so far overcome all that is calculated to restrain it.—Let us remember, that while without these restraints man could not be happy here, without something more than these, he cannot be happy hereafter. E.

THOUGHTS ON THE SABBATH.

When we take up the Bible with the view of ascertaining its true meaning and the extent of our duty; we ought to consider that God speaks to us, as intelligent creatures, who are bound to make the best use of our understanding for the discovery of his will. We must not presume to limit the Almighty as to the manner in which he shall make known his will to us: in whatever way this is done, we are called to implicit obedience. Express command is not the only method by which our great Creator and Governor has pointed out our duty; he has also revealed his will be symbols, by prophetic and somewhat obscure declarations, by significant actions of men divinely inspired, and by parables, and in these the obscurity we sometimes meet with, may be designed to excite us to diligent inquiries after the will of God, and to be a test of our humility and sincerity.

Under the impression of these considerations, let us inquire, whether it be not the will of God that mankind, in all ages, should dedicate one day in seven to the more immediate worship of the Almighty, and other religious exercises; subject to certain limitations which the Bible has pointed out, and which our present condition in this world has rendered neccessary.

If in our researches, we should meet with some passages of Scripture, which at first sight appear contradictory; let us apply the following rules of interpretation.

1. Let us endeavour to find out some sense in which the apparently contradictory passages will agree, without doing violence to the expressions on either side.

2. Let us interpret obscure passages by those which are plain; instead of forcing the plain passages to bend to those which are obscure.

3. Let us, in all doubtful cases, choose that side which is practically the most safe and agreeable to the general tenor of Scripture.

I shall consider the nature and extent of the command to sanctify the Sabbath, as it stood before the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai, as it was explained and enforced during the Jewish dispensation; and as it continues obligatory upon the disciples of Christ to the end of the world.

The first intimation respecting the Sabbath is given in the second chapter of the Book of Genesis. This is a very important passage of Scripture, and deserves our most serious attention both as it respects the meaning of the words, and the period at which they were delivered. The second verse informs us what the Almighty did with regard to his own work. "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made;" the third verse proceeds to state, "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it;" that is, he set it apart for holy purposes; for such is the meaning of the word *sanctified* in the Old Testament, when applied to inanimate things, or to persons with relation to any office or function. Thus the priests, the tabernacles, and all the furniture, were said to be sanctified, when they were set apart for the service of God. In no other sense can the word *sanctified* be understood, with relation to the seventh day, without forsaking the scriptural meaning of the term, and falling into absurdity.

This command, to set apart the seventh day for sacred purposes, was given to man in his primeval purity. Being created upright, he loved the Lord his God, with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. The labours of each day in this happy state of mind, would be dedicated to God's service. There was no need of a day of sacred rest to withdraw the mind from the carnal eagerness of worldly pursuits, or to recruit the body from oppressive labour. Man now enjoyed perpetual communion with God. His labour was light. "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it." Thorns and thistles had not yet sprung up to create the necessity of laborious exertions.—For, "out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." The earth had not yet received the curse which caused man to "eat bread in the sweat of his face."

If in this state, the sacred rest of a seventh day was ordained by infinite wisdom, in what period of time can it become unnecessary to fallen man? Shall the consecration of a seventh day for the cultivation of our minds, blinded by sin, and distracted by corrupt affections be thought needless; when it was appointed to man in innocence and perfect holiness? Shall the mercies of creation require a frequently returning day for their celebration; and shall not those of redemption, in addition, call for an equal attention? In short, when we compare the state of fallen man with that of our first parents, during whose original purity this command was given, we shall find a variety of considerations urging upon him the superior necessity of sanctifying a seventh day.

Besides, a general command thus given to the representatives of the whole species, must continue in force forever, unless it be abrogated by the same authority, by which it was created.

Whether there be any passages in Scripture, which abrogate the law of a Sabbath, with a clearness equal to that with which it was enacted, will be the subject of our future consideration. The observance of a Sabbath cannot be opposed with reason, unless it shall appear that there is a clear abrogation of this command. It cannot be said with decency, that the neglect of the Sabbath is a more spiritual service to God than the observance of it. To attach any ideas of superstition to the observance of a Sabbath, would scarcely fall short of blasphemy against the Almighty, whose wisdom made such an appointment before sin had entered into the world.

It is the duty of man at all times, and in every period of the world, to love God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; but particular exercises and proofs of this love may be enjoined at different periods. The worship of God, however, is required by a permanent obligation; and the exercise of this worship, especially when it is social, requires a cessation from other employment, and seasons appropriated to itself. Is it not then in the highest degree improbable, that man, when employed in the innocent labours of cultivating the garden of Eden, should be required to withdraw, during a seventh portion of his time, from this pleasing employment, to exercise himself in one still more pleasing to a holy soul, yet that we, who find it so difficult to abstract our minds from the too eager pursuits of worldly things, should be left to follow our own ways in the day originally set apart for the solemn service of religion? Such a supposition I cannot help thinking to be highly improbable, whether I consider the sanctification of the Sabbath in the light of a duty, or a privilege.

In whatever point of view we contemplate it, the Sabbath was instituted when mankind stood the least in need of that institution. Was the Sabbath designed to be a day of rest? It was instituted when the labour of our first parents was merely to keep and dress the garden of Eden. Was it designed to be a season of instruction? The law of God was then written on the heart of man. He was made after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. Was it designed to call off the mind from the anxiety of worldly cares? Our first parents had nothing to distract their minds: they saw God in all his works: they walked in innocence and were not ashamed. Was it a day appointed for more immediate communion with God, in the exercises of holy worship? The pious pair enjoyed a perpetual communion with God: they approached him without fear, and served him with the profoundest reverence.

Can we then imagine, that an institution appointed when there was the least possible need of it, should be set aside when every circumstance in the situation of mankind loudly calls for such an institution? How greatly do the incessant toils of many require a day of rest! What a powerful tendency have the anxious cares of life to shut out the consideration of the world to come! The ignorance of many, especially of the lower classes of mankind, requires that time for instruction, which no other day, except the Sabbath, will afford; and without stated periods for the public worship of God, the very idea of religion would vanish out of the world.

These considerations forcibly impress my mind with the persuasion, that the sanctification of a seventh day, that is, the setting of it apart for holy purposes, was an appointment of God, and is of perpetual obligation. W. H.

Ch. Observer.

A letter from the Rev. David Brainerd, while residing in Boston, to his brother John, at Bethel, the town of Christian Indians in New-Jersey.

Dear Brother,

I am now just on the verge of eternity, expecting very speedily to appear in the unseen world.—I feel myself no more an inhabitant of earth, and sometimes earnestly long to depart and be with Christ. I bless God, he has for some years given me an abiding conviction, that it is impossible for any rational creatures to enjoy true happiness without being entirely devoted to him. Under the influence of this conviction, I have in some measure acted. Oh, that I had done more so, I saw both the excellency and necessity of holiness in life; but never in such a manner as now, when I am just brought from the sides of the grave. O, my brother, pursue after holiness; press towards this blessed mark; and let your thirsty soul continually say "I shall never be satisfied till I awake in thy likeness." Although there has been a great deal of selfishness in my views, of which I am ashamed, and for which my soul is humbled at every view; yet, blessed be God, I find I have really had for the most part, such a concern for his glory, and the advancement of his kingdom in the world, that it is a satisfaction to me to reflect upon *these years.*

And now, my dear brother, as I must press you to pursue after holiness, to be as much in fasting and prayer as your health will allow, and to live above the rate of common christians; so I must entreat you solemnly to attend to your public work, labour to distinguish between true and false religion; and to that end watch the motions of God's spirit upon your own heart. Look to him for help, and impartially compare your experiences with his word. Read Mr. Edwards on the *affections*, where the essence and soul of religion is clearly distinguished from false affections. Value religious joys according to the subject matter of them: there are many who rejoice in their supposed justification—but what do these joys argue, but only that they love themselves?—

Whereas, in true spiritual joys, the soul rejoices in God for what he is in himself; blesses God for his holiness, sovereignty, power, faithfulness and all his perfections; adores God that he is what he is, that he is unchangeably possessed of infinite glory and happiness.

Now, when men thus rejoice in the perfections of God, and in the infinite excellency of the way of salvation by Christ and in the holy commands of God, which are a transcript of his holy nature—*these* joys are divine and spiritual. Our joys will stand by us at the hour of death, if we can be then satisfied, that we have thus acted above self; and in a disinterested manner, if I may so express it, rejoice in the glory of the blessed God. I fear you are not sufficiently aware how much false religion there is in the world; many serious christians and valuable ministers are too easily imposed upon by this false *blaze*. I likewise fear you are not sensible of the dreadful effects and consequences of this false religion. Let me tell you, it is the *devil* transformed into an angel of light; it is a friend of hell that always springs up with every revival of religion, and stabs and murders the cause of God, while it passes current with multitudes of well meaning people for the height of religion. Set yourself, my brother, to crush appearances of this nature among the Indians and never encourage, any degree of heat without light.—Charge my people, in the name of their dying minister, yea, in the name of *him who was dead and is alive*, to live and walk as becomes the gospel. Tell them how great the expectations of God and his people are from them, and how awfully they will wound God's cause, if they fall into vice, as well as fatally prejudice other poor Indians. Always insist that their experiences are rotten, that their joys are delusive, although they may have been raised up into the *third heavens* in their own conceit by them, unless the main tenor of their lives, be spiritual, watchful and holy. In pressing these things "thou shalt both save thyself and those that hear thee."

God knows that I was heartily willing to serve him longer in the work of the ministry, although it had still been attended with all the labours and hardships of past years, if he had seen fit that it should be so, but as his will now appears otherwise, I am fully content and can with the utmost freedom say, "The will of the Lord be done." It affects me, to think of leaving you in a world of sin; my heart pities you. That those storms and tempests are yet before you, from which I trust through grace I am almost delivered.—But "God lives, and blessed be my Rock;" he is the same Almighty Friend; and will, I trust, be your guide and helper, as he has been mine.

And now, my dear brother, "I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give your inheritance among all them that are sanctified." May you enjoy the divine presence both in private and public; and may "the arms of your hands be made strong by the right hand of the mighty God of Jacob." Which are the passionate desires and prayers of your affectionate dying brother.

DAVID BRAINERD.

From the Utica Repository.

THOUGHTS ON DISINTERESTED BENEVOLENCE.

It is not my purpose to enter into a discussion as to the propriety of the term *disinterested.* I am fully persuaded that no one ever makes objections to the term, who is satisfied with the thing signified by it. But if it were not so, a dispute about *words* is one in which I am not at present inclined to engage. And it is universally conceded that every man has a right to use any words he pleases, provided he explains them, and clearly shows, what he means by them. I will endeavour, therefore, to state, as clearly as I can, what I understand by disinterested benevolence.

Benevolence is good will, a wishing well to another, a regard for his happiness. It is obvious that I may wish well to another for two reasons. I may wish well to another, because I suppose his welfare is so connected with my own, that the security of his welfare, will tend to secure my own. If I wish well to another for this reason merely, it is evident that my own welfare is the ultimate object. This I call a selfish regard for the happiness of another. But I may also wish well to another for a different reason. I may not see any connexion between his welfare and my own. There may be no such connexion. But I may wish well to him from a sincere regard for his happiness in itself considered. I may have nothing else in view at the time but his welfare, and may sincerely wish it secured for its own sake. This is what I call a disinterested regard.

Disinterested benevolence regards the happiness of all beings capable of enjoyment or suffering, in proportion to its real worth, so far as that is known. God has a perfect knowledge of the real worth of his own happiness, and of that, of every other being in the universe; and no doubt he regards each exactly according to its real worth. The knowledge of creatures is imperfect; and the boundary of their knowledge must be the boundary of their regard; for they cannot regard that of which they have no knowledge: It is the same to them as if it did not exist.

If disinterested benevolence regards the happiness of all beings in proportion to its real worth, then every disinterested being regards his own happiness according to its importance, as well as that of others. And consequently, those passages of scripture, which express the regard God has to his own glory, and the regard saints have to their own happiness, are not inconsistent with the doctrine of disinterested benevolence. They only express a disinterested regard to each, according to its real worth.

It is the nature of disinterested benevolence, to give up a less good to secure a greater. Selfishness would lead me to give up a less good of my own, to secure a greater good of my own; but disinterestedness leads me to give up a less good of my own, to secure the greater good of another. The common sense of mankind acknowledges the obligation to do this in the common affairs of life. The life of a brute animal is of less importance than the life of a man; and where the one can be secured by the sacrifice of the other, no one hesitates which ought to be done. The less good must be given up to secure the greater. It is a less evil for me to part with some portion of what contributes to my comfort, than it is for my neighbour to be in want of the necessaries of life; and no one doubts that I ought to submit to the less evil, to exempt my neighbour from the greater. The loss of my usual rest for one night is a less evil to me when in health, than it is for my sick neighbour to be deprived of the necessary care and attention; and no one doubts that I ought to submit to the less evil, to prevent my neighbour from suffering the greater one. The exposing my health, by plunging into the water, or rushing through the flames, is a less evil than that my helpless neighbour should be left to perish for want of my assistance; and no one hesitates as to what I ought to do in such a case. I ought cheerfully to submit to the less evil, to deliver my neighbour from the greater. The liberty and exemption from suffering of the man who violates the wholesome laws of his country, is a less good than the peace and order of the whole community; and no one hesitates, in this case, which ought to be given up to secure the other. It was a less evil for the Lord Jesus Christ to suffer death on the cross, than would have resulted from the whole human race being left to perish without an atonement, and no one doubts that he did right in submitting to the less evil, for the sake of relieving others from the greater one.

All the divine conduct is directed by disinterested benevolence. God regards his own glory according to its real worth; and he regards the happiness of every creature, also, according to its real worth. He has formed a plan which includes all events, and which will ultimately secure the highest possible sum of happiness in the intelligent universe; and he is constantly employed in carrying that plan into execution. He regards his own glory more than he does the good of any creature, or of all creatures; not because it is his own, but because it is worth more. But he does not disregard the good of any creature, even of the smallest insect which is capable of the least degree of enjoyment or suffering. "His tender mercies are over all his works." He sees, however that the present comfort of some of his creatures is not so great a good as some other good which he can secure by giving it up, and he does give it up, and brings a variety of calamities upon them. He sees, also, that the future and eternal happiness of some of his creatures, is not so great a good as is some other good which he can secure by giving it up, and he does give it up, and dooms some of his creatures to suffer endless misery in hell. In all this, he acts wisely and benevolently; for he never gives up a greater good to secure a less, but only a less, to secure a greater.

Moral goodness in creatures consists in disinterested benevolence. There is in the good man, the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, the same mind that is in God. He feels as God feels, according to the measure of his knowledge. He regards the happiness of every being according to its real worth, as far as he knows what is its real worth. He knows that the glory of God is worth more than the happiness of any creature, or of all creatures; and he regards it more. He knows that the happiness of his neighbour is as really valuable as his own: and he loves his neighbour as himself. He knows that the happiness of a brute animal is worth something, and as a merciful man, he "regardeth the life of his beast." But he is always ready to give up a less good to secure a greater. He is not only willing to give up a less good of his own to secure a greater good of his own, which a selfish man may do; but he is also willing to give up a less good of his own, to secure a greater good to his neighbour.

Disinterested Benevolence cannot be carried too far. If the principle is admitted, all the consequences must be admitted. If it is right in small things, it is right also in great things. If it is right at all, it is right when carried to its full extent. If it is wrong when carried to its full extent, it is entirely wrong. If it is my duty to be willing to give up the smallest good of my own to secure the smallest greater good to others, it is equally my duty to be willing to give up the greatest good of my own to secure a still greater good to others. And if it is wrong for me to be willing to give up the greatest good of my own to secure a still greater good to others, it must be equally wrong for me to be willing to give up the smallest good of my own, to secure the smallest greater good to others, The principle is the same, whether the good given up be greater or smaller. If it is my duty to be willing to give up one degree of good of my own to secure ten degrees of good to others, it is equally my duty to be willing to give up ten degrees of good of my own to secure a hundred degrees of good to others, or one thousand degrees of good of my own to secure ten thousand degrees of good to others. And so on, without end. For, on the same principle, it is my duty to be willing to give up one part, or another part, or every part, of my own good, to secure a proportionably greater good to others. The principle is the same in every case. It is my duty in all cases to be willing to give up a less good of my own to secure a greater good to others; and if it should be all I have, that does not alter the principle. The only thing to be considered is, that the good which I am willing to give up is a less good than that which is to be secured by it. If Paul supposed, according to the best of his knowledge that his own salvation was a less good than that of his brethren, it was right for him to be willing to be "accursed from Christ, for his brethren." And if we know, as we all do know, that the glory of God is worth more than our salvation, we ought to regard it more, and be willing that God should give up our eternal salvation, if he should see that his glory requires its. And as all who do not know themselves, to be christians, do not know how the glory of God may require them to be disposed of for eternity; as they do not know whether the glory of God may require their salvation to be secured or given up for ever, they ought to be willing to commit themselves to his wise and benevolent disposal, and be willing that he should take them to heaven, or send them to hell, as he shall see most for his glory.

I am aware that many are unwilling to adopt this conclusion.—But I see not how they can avoid it, but by denying disinterested benevolence altogether. Let us be consistent with ourselves. And if we profess to believe in a disinterested religion at all, let us admit all that is implied in it. But if we are unwilling to admit all that is implied in it, let us not profess to believe in a disinterested religion at all. Let us become the open advocates of a selfish religion; a religion which is natural to every man; a religion, which, not only does not require any change of heart, but is totally inconsistent with any such change as the Bible describes, in which old things pass away, and all things become new. Selfishness, certainly, is an old thing. All the affections of the sinner are selfish; and if all the affections of the saint are selfish also, there is no radical difference between them; and the doctrine of regeneration is nothing but a delusion. FIDES.

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SERMON.

PROVERBS, XVI. 31.—*The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.*

This is a wise saying of the wise man, which has no particular connection with what is said before it or what is said after it. It needs no comments, for it is a plain declaration of a plain important truth.

That piety is a peculiar ornament to old people,

It is proposed to consider,

I. Who may properly be called old people.

II. What is to be understood by their piety. And,

III. In what respects their piety is their peculiar ornament.

1. We are to consider who may properly be called old people. This is a phrase to which common use has affixed no definite meaning. Old and young are relative terms, and may admit of different significations. We often speak of some as young, of some as younger, and of some as youngest. And on the contrary, we often speak of the old, the older, and the oldest. Children always think their parents are old. Some think men may be called old at forty, or fifty, or sixty, and it is generally, if not universally thought, that those are really old who have arrived at seventy and above seventy years of age. There seems to be no impropriety however, in calling any man old, rather than young, who has passed the meridian of life, which is commonly supposed to be at about forty-five. The scripture represents those as old, who have gray hairs here and there upon them. David considered this as a mark of his old age. "Now when I am old and gray headed, O God, forsake me not." The distinction in ages has always been considered as an important distinction by all mankind, who have marked it by some peculiar symptoms or visible effects, which the different periods of life produce on the body or mind. The young are fond of the distinction between them and the old; and though the old cannot deny the distinction,

yet they generally regret it. But it ought to be realized by both the young and the old; for God has made it the ground of different precepts and prohibitions in his word. He requires that of the young, which he does not require of the old, and requires that of the old, which he does not of the young. Though God has mentioned threescore years and ten, as the common boundary of life; yet he has no where mentioned any particular period in life, when a person *ceases* to be young, and *begins* to be old. He leaves it to every individual to judge for himself, when the precepts to the young bind him, and when the precepts to the old bind him. It is a matter of serious importance, therefore, that every one should judge justly, with respect to his being old, or young. We are not to determine whether we are young, or whether we are old, by what others think or say of us; but by what we know of ourselves respecting this distinct period in our lives, which God has distinguished and which he regards. None can either read, or hear the word of God properly and profitably, without numbering their days aright, and realizing whether they are in the morning, in the meridian, or decline of life. How many have been startled the first time they heard themselves called old, or the first time they realised themselves to be so? This discourse is designed for the aged, and it seems necessary that all who stand in that rank should know that it speaks to them in particular. Let us now consider,

2. What is to be understood by the piety of old people, which is their peculiar ornament or crown of glory. It is called their righteousness in the text. Righteousness is often used in Scripture to denote *holiness* in heart and life, in distinction from every thing that is unholy in heart and life. When any are renewed in the spirit of their mind, they are said "to put on the new man, which after God is created in *righteousness and true holiness.*" Righteousness is true holiness, which is the moral excellence of all moral beings, and the essence of all vital piety in mankind. The piety of old people implies two things. And,

1. It implies their cordial belief of the great truths of the gospel. None can truly embrace the gospel, without cordially believing the peculiar and essential doctrines or principles, upon which it is founded. Man must believe, in order to be saved, what the gospel teaches concerning God, concerning Christ, concerning themselves, and concerning the future state of rewards and punishments. They must believe the existence, the perfections, the government, and the purposes of God. They must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; that his laws

are holy, just, and good; that he reigns in righteousness, and disposes of all his works and creatures in perfect wisdom, justice, and goodness; and that he will finally promote the highest holiness and happiness of the universe, by punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous in the future state. They must believe, that the Lord Jesus Christ is both God and man in two distinct natures, and one person forever; that he has suffered and died to make atonement for the sins of the world; that they have sinned, and do deserve the curse of the law which they have broken; that they must renounce all self-righteousness and self-dependence, and rely alone on the atonement of Christ for pardon and acceptance in the sight of God, and that it is only by perseverance, in faith, repentance, and obedience, they can reach the kingdom of heaven; while all the finally impenitent and unbelieving will be cast off forever. All true piety, is founded on the knowledge, the belief, and the love of the great and peculiar truths of the gospel. Nor is this all, for,

2. The piety of old people implies the practice of the *duties*, as well as the belief of the *doctrines* of the gospel. It seems to be suggested in the text, that old righteous persons have lived not only a *long*, but a *righteous life*. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in *the way* of righteousness." It is generally true, though there may be some exceptions, that aged christians have lived a long time in the way of holiness and obedience to the divine commands. The promises of the gospel are expressly made to those who overcome, to those who continue in well-doing, and to those who endure unto the end. The piety of the aged is aged piety, and productive of the fruits of righteousness. Internal piety always produces external obedience to the precepts of the gospel. Though the oldest Christians never arrive at sinless perfection in this life, yet they generally grow in grace as they grow in years, and become more and more satisfied with living reconciled to dying, and desirous of being absent from the body, and present with the Lord. It is to be expected, that aged saints will be found in the way of righteousness, and living under the happy influence of the great and precious promises of which God has given them. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruits in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing: to shew that the Lord is upright." Though the piety of the young and that of the old are essentially alike; yet the piety of the aged has a specific and superior excellence.

It now remains to consider.

3. In what respects, their piety is their peculiar ornament. Piety adorns the hoary head, and spreads a peculiar beauty over the aged. This is the universal opinion of mankind. Those who look upon piety as a blemish in the morning or meridian of life, admire it as a beauty in old age. Who ever saw a *poor* man of piety, suffering the decays of nature, and the infirmities of old age, that did not say to himself that his piety, in his situation, was proper, was necessary, and truly amiable. Who ever saw a *rich* man of piety, bowing under the weight of years, leaning on his staff, or lying on a bed of sickness and death, and just ready to leave all his possessions and honors; that did not say to himself, I had rather possess that man's *piety*, than all the wealth and earthly enjoyments, which he is leaving behind him. How much soever piety may be despised in the young, the rich and the great, in the early stages of life, yet it always appears to be a crown of glory in those, who are in the vale of years, and on the borders of eternity. It is a peculiar beauty and ornament to old people, in various respects. For,

1. Their piety appears with peculiar *purity*. They have been thrown into the furnace of affliction, and experienced many fiery trials, which were designed to purge them from their dross and tin. They have been made to distinguish between nature and grace, which were often blended together, in their early piety. They have learned the wide difference between natural and spiritual affections, and discovered their great leanness and imperfection in holiness, which has clothed them with humility, the brightest feature in the Christian character. They have been taught to keep their *hearts* as well as their *lives*, with all diligence. They have become better acquainted with God, with themselves, and with the world. They have found the folly and danger of leaning to their own understanding, and trusting in their own heart. They more habitually acknowledge God in all their ways, and seek to him for continual guidance and assistance in duty. They are in some measure cured of their natural and spiritual pride. They were once proud of their piety, and wished to be esteemed as the excellent of the earth. Nor were they merely proud of their piety, but of their superiority. Instead of esteeming others better than themselves, they esteemed themselves better than others, which was spiritual pride. But when they are become aged, they think more soberly of themselves, & as they ought to think, and walk safely before God; which exhibits their piety in a more pure and amiable light. The purified piety of Peter, of Paul, and especially of John, who outlived all the other Apostles, shone with pecu-

liar lustre, in the close of life. Abraham appears better after he was tried, than he did before. Jacob appears vastly better after he was tried, than he did before. His sons appear vastly better after they were tried, than they did before. The piety of David Brainerd grew more pure and beautiful, as he drew nearer and nearer to the grave. Aged piety is tried, purified, refined piety, and spreads a peculiar glory over those, who have gone through the storms and tempests of life, spent their days in the service of God, and are waiting for their appointed change.

2. Piety is a peculiar ornament to old people, because it hides the infirmities and imperfections, which are peculiar to their age. Old age is usually attended with so many infirmities of body and mind, that it exhibits a spectacle, from which every body turns away his eyes with pain,or disgust, You can hardly bear to see a man. with whom you have been acquainted in his better days, after he has lost his bodily activity, his hearing, his seeing, his memory, and all his sociability. These are the usual effects and consequences of old age, in a greater or less degree; and they are certainly great corporeal and mental imperfections,which need something to cover them. But there is nothing can cover these imperfections but vital piety, which aged christians often retain after their bodily and intellectual powers are much impaired. This was the case of the apostle John. He lived until he became very feeble in body and mind, but he retained his spirit of piety, which rendered him peculiarly amiable and venerable. When he could do no more, he used to sit in the chair and say, "Little children love one another." Who could see, or despise his decays of nature, which were adorned with the beauties of holiness? How amiable does piety render aged parents in the eyes of their dutiful children?—How amiable does piety render any aged, feeble christian, not only in the view of his friends and acquaintance, but of all who witness his pious appearance, and hear his pious language? How many aged christians lose their bodily activity while their mental abilities are but very little impaired, and their growth in grace is increased; in such cases they often become more amiable, than they were in their full vigour and activity.—Their piety shines with peculiar lustre, and hides, and more than hides the imbecility of body and mind, though continually increasing to the day of their death.—Their declining path is like the declining sun, which sends forth less heat, but exhibits more brightness, until it sinks below the horizon, as the beams of the setting sun appear more mild and pleasant, than its meridian rays, so every body loves to see piety in the aged

notwithstanding all their other imperfections, more than in those in whom it is rather obscured by natural excellencies.

3. Piety is a peculiar ornament to old people, because it renders them useful, when they would otherwise be useless and burdensome to the world. Those who are destitute of piety, when they become old, infirm, decripid and incapable of pursuing any useful employment, seem to serve no other valuable purpose than to be passive instruments of admonishing others of their frailty and mortality and of the guilt and danger of living and dying hopeless and wretched. But piety renders men useful after their labouring days are over, and they are gradually sinking under the decays of nature and the usual infirmities of old age. They are still capable of serving God and their generation, by their examples, their instructions, their admonitions, and their prayers for the friends and for the enemies of God. Though Simeon had lived to old age, and had long waited for the consolation of Israel, and his own departure out of the world; yet he was eminently useful as long as he lived.—And though Anna the prophetess had lived to the great age of fourscore and four years; yet she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. Though Joshua and Caleb were probably very much worn down, by their labours fatigues, and sufferings, during their long journey through the wilderness; yet they continued to be extensively useful, for years after they arrived in Canaan, in governing, in instructing, and restraining the people of God. They served the Lord and were the means of the people's serving the Lord as long as they lived Piety made Barzillai and Jehoisada signally useful, through a long life to the day of their death. Piety had the same happy influence on Paul and John in their old age, who continued eminently useful till death put a period to their services and sufferings. How many hoary heads are now to be found in the way of righteousness, and crowned with glory? Are there not many old disciples, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, to be found in our churches at the present day? Are there not many grey-headed pious parents, walking in the way of righteousness and with a perfect heart, usefully instructing their children and households, to keep the way of the Lord? The pious examples and instructions of aged parents, are often tenfold more valuable to their families, than all the wealth and respectability they can bestow upon them. Piety renders old people useful, not only to their families and friends, but to the world. They are visible monuments of sovereign grace, and show, as the psalmist says, that the Lord is righteous; that is, faithful to his prom-

ises, in carrying his friends even to old age, and supporting and comforting them, when the world and the things of the world can no longer satisfy their desires, or alleviate their burdens. Old people walking in the way of righteousness, and rejoicing in God, exhibit, a spectacle tenfold more beautiful and instructive, than the young, the rich, and the grand exhibit, while rolling in their carriages and rejoicing in their vanity. That piety, which renders *old* people useful and valuable, gives them a crown of glory, superior to any crown that the graceless, useless, and worthless can put on. Piety in *old* people especially, gives a beauty to their persons, when all exterior ornaments are faded and gone. I may add,

4. That piety is a peculiar ornament to old people, because it makes them happy in themselves, and happy to others. Old age usually draws after it, not only a train of *outward* infirmities, troubles, and afflictions, but various species of *inward and moral* disorders, which are more grievous to bear. Human nature is differently affected, and puts on different appearances in the different stages of life. In the early stages of life, men are naturally joyful, cheerful, and pleased with the scenes they are passing through, with the objects with which they are surrounded, with those with whom they are conversant, with the enjoyments they possess, and the promising prospects before them. But when they begin to decline in life, and arrive at old age, their views and feelings in respect to the men of the world and the things of the world, are greatly and sensibly altered. Instead of being joyful, they are sorrowful; instead of being cheerful they are melancholly; instead of being pleased with every thing, they are displeased and disgusted with every thing; and instead of seeing promising prospests before them, they see nothing but accumulating evils, disappointments, and wretchedness. Their spirits sink, their resolutions fail, they become querelous, murmur at God, and complain of every body and of every thing. There are thousands of such discontented, unhappy old people, who are destitute of the comforts and supports of religion. But piety makes old people happy in themselves, and happy to others. Their love to God and man, their faith, their hope, their patience, their submission, and their meekness, cure or restrain the moral disorders and imperfections, which are peculiar to *old age*, and render them happy in themselves, and happy to others. What a pleasure do dutiful children take in attending, assisting, and gratifying the desires of their pious, patient, peaceable parents. Who would not have been willing to take care of Barzilla, or Simeon, in their old age?

It is true, dutiful children will not fail to treat their parents with respect and tenderness, though strangers to piety, and subject to the various *moral* disorders, as well as the natural infirmities of unrenewed human nature, which are peculiar to old age; but it must give them pain to see their comfortless parents, and to hear their murmurs and complaints. The want of piety in old people is a great evil to themselves and to others. How happy is the family, where the aged *pious* parents command the esteem, the love, and the attention of the whole household! But how unhappy is the family, where the aged parents have not the love of God or man, in them, and are perpetually murmuring, and complaining and pining away under an insupportable load of guilt and misery By this contrast, we may see what a peculiar ornament piety is in *old* people. It is more precious than rubies, and all the things that can be compared with it. It is a pearl of great price. It is a treasure on earth, and a treasure laid up in heaven. It is a fountain of life, and a lasting source of happiness in health and in sickness, in prosperity and adversity, under the decays of nature, and in the hour of death. Whoever wishes to see many days, and reach old age, and obtain a crown of glory, let him walk in the way of righteousness, and give his heart and life to God.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. It appears from the estimate which has been made, that there are many more old people, than they and others are apt to think.—Old age begins so soon after the meridian of life, and comes on so gradually, that many think they are young and are thought to be young, while they are really in a strict and proper sense, not young but old. Besides, almost every person desires to be young rather than old, and therefore is unwilling to know and realize that he has passed the meridian of life,and is descending to old age,with great, but insensible rapidity.—How many are there who have past the meridian of life are above fifty or above sixty, or above seventy, and several above eighty? But are they generally disposed to number their days aright, and take their proper place among the aged? Would not some, who have hoary heads, contradict the testimony of their eyes, and deny that they belong to any class of *old* people? But would it not be wiser for them to consider their latter end, and realize how fast and how near they are approaching to it? This would lead them to form a more just estimate of life, and of all the enjoyments, and prospects of life. This would lead them to read and hear what God says to the aged, with seriousness and self-application. And this would lead them to set their

houses and their souls in order, and to stand in the posture of servants waiting for the coming of their Lord.

2. If gray hairs are a *natural* as well as *moral* ornament to old people; then they ought always to be treated with respect. Gray hairs are a plain indication, that those who have them, have lived a long time in the world, have endured the labors, the burdens, and the numerous evils of life, and have been spared and employed by God, to answer some wise and valuable purposes, in respect to their own and future generations. An old patriot, an old valiant general, an old faithful soldier, and every old parent and old man, ought to be respected, whether pious, or not. All old people have served and suffered in the world, and done something in God's view, for the benefit of mankind, and therefore have a claim to their respect, on account of their age. This respect, God has expressly required to be paid to the aged. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God." God has likewise manifested his awful displeasure against those, who treated the aged and pious prophet with contempt. But the strongest obligation lies upon children to treat their aged parents with respect and veneration. God expressly commanded the children of Israel, "to honor their father and mother, that their days might be long on the land which he gave them." There is no virtue I believe, so *commonly and visibly* rewarded in this life, as filial obedience and respect to parents. Nor on the contrary, is there any *sin*, so commonly and visibly punished in this life, as disobedience and disrespect to parents. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Parents on account of their age, their authority, their protection, their tender affection, and anxious cares for their children, lay them under sacred obligations to pay them filial love, obedience, and respect. The mutual relation between parents and children, is very intimate, and their mutual affections ought to be sincere and lasting; and they are almost always so, on the side of parents, but not always so on the side of children. It is a rare thing indeed, that parents despise, or desert their children under any circumstances whatever; but it is too often seen, that children will disown, or neglect, or despise, or desert their parents, and especially in old age, and in circumstances of sickness, poverty and distress. It is for this reason, probably, that God has more strictly and repeatedly charged children to love, reverence, and obey their parents, than he has charged parents to love and regard the interest and happiness of their children. God guards human nature by his com-

mands, on its weakest side. He knows that the affections of parents towards their children, are stronger than the affections of children towards their parents. Accordingly he lays the stronger obligations on children to be kind, tender, obedient, and respectful to their parents, especially if they are infirm, poor, afflicted, and bowing under the weight of old age.

3. As piety is the peculiar ornament of old people, so the *want* of it is a peculiar blemish in their character. Childhood and youth are vanity. Manhood is enterprising and aspiring. The want of piety in these stages of life is so common, that it is but little noticed. In the next and more serious stages of life, after men have seen the vanities of the world, experienced the reverses of fortune, and found themselves failing in corporeal and intellectual vigour and activity, and hastening towards old age,if they have not reached it, common sense says it is time for them to seek and secure the *one thing needful.* And if they then *neglect* to embrace and practice religion, it is a visible blemish in their character. It argues a vain mind, a hard heart, a stupid conscience, and an unwise disregard to their future and eternal happiness. It demonstrates, that they are, in the sense of Scripture, fools. They have eyes, but they see not. They have ears, but they hear not. They have hearts, but they feel not their moral obligations to God and to themselves. And is it not a *blemish* in the character of rational creatures, to act irrationally?—This blemish is more visible and more reproachful in aged, than in other sinners. They have had line upon line, and precept upon precept of their duty, their danger, and their guilt. They cannot say, that the world has allowed them, as it has allowed young people, to neglect religion. Permit me to hold up to view a father who is fifty, or sixty or seventy, or nearly eighty years old,and who has remained graceless and prayerless, until he is just dropping into the grave. Is not the want of piety in such a person a great *blemish* in his character, whether he be rich or poor, learned or unlearned? See another man, who has passed through all the different stages of life, and arrived at the last, and who is still profane, intemperate, stupid, prayerless, and tottering over the grave. Is not the want of piety a great blemish in his character? All young people wonder at old sinners, whether they are openly vicious, or not. Let every sinner look at his character, and then at his age. What are you? and where are you? Are you impenitent sinners? And are you on the brink of eternity? Is it not time for not a few to ask themselves such pertinent, solemn, and interesting questions? Are not many of you, before you are a-

ware, old people? And are you not exhibiting the want of piety, before the eyes of the world, which spreads a blemish over all your natural excellencies?

4. Since piety is a peculiar ornament to old people, it is very unwise to neglect obtaining it early in life. Piety is a beauty in the young, as well as in the old. It lays the only solid and permanent foundation for peace, happiness, and usefulness in every stage of life. None become truly happy, and virtuously useful, before they become pious. They must give their hearts before they give their lives to God. They are by nature, totally destitute of holiness, and under the entire dominion of a depraved, selfish, sinful heart, and unfit for any duty towards God and man. They are dead in trespasses and sins. They must repent, become reconciled to God, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in the way of righteousness, in order to become truly pious. This is a duty which they have no right to neglect, and which it is their wisdom immediately to perform. Those who have worn the ornament of piety in old age, have generally become pious in their early days. Joseph was a pious youth. Moses was a pious youth. David was a pious youth. Samuel was a pious youth. Timothy was a pious youth. It seems that most of those, who have ever become pious, have become pious in the morning of life. It is not only sinful, but hazardous for the young to put off the concerns of their souls to the decline of life and old age. It is uncertain whether their lives will be spared; and if they are spared, the longer they delay, the more their consciences will be stupified, the more their hearts will be attached to the world, and alienated from God, and opposed to every thing of a holy and religious nature. This you may learn from your own unhappy experience, and from the conduct of those more advanced in life. If you wait for a more convenient season, you will probably continue to wait, to wait, to wait, till God will wait no longer, and put you beyond the reach of mercy. You may now think, that the want of piety is no blemish in your character, but sooner than you expect, it may be so. Though you are *now* young, you will soon be old, and feel the infirmities, burdens, and accumulated evils of old age; which, without piety, may sink you in gloom, despondence, and incurable wretchedness. Can you bear the thought of losing your health, strength, and activity, and becoming blind, or deaf, or decripit, or helpless, without the supports and consolations of piety? It most seriously concerns you now in the vigour of your days, to remember your Creator, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou wilt say, I have no pleasure in them.

Though you may escape sickness, accidents, disappointments, bereavements, and many infirmities, burdens, and trials, which others meet with in the course of life, yet you cannot escape old age, or death. Time will strip you of every thing unless you choose that good part which cannot be taken from you.

5. If piety be a peculiar ornament to old people; then aged saints have great reason to be thankful to God for what he has done for them. They were once young, vain, stupid, thoughtless, prayerless; but God in sovereign mercy arrested their attention, fastened conviction on their conscience, and turned them from darkness to light and from sin to holiness, while he left others of the same age and of the same character to pursue their course to a wretched old age, or cut them down in the morning of life and sent them into a miserable eternity. Such distinguishing mercies call for distinguishing gratitude and praise. Aged saints cannot look upon their past lives before and after they received the grace of God in truth, without seeing, that it has been of the Lord's mercies that they have not been consumed, and fixed in a state of everlasting alienation and separation from God and from all good. David in his old age, had such humiliating views of himself, and such grateful views of the special and distinguishing grace of God towards him. This is his humble and grateful language. "Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb; thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. I am as a wonder unto many: but thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honor all the day.—Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth." Aged saints ought to renounce the world and become dead to the vain and trifling scenes and objects and pursuits of this momentary life, and spend the residue of their days in praise, retirement, and devotion. All things conspire to make them serious, devout, and grateful. The trials they have experienced, the blessings they have enjoyed, the dangers they have escaped, the decays of nature, and their increasing infirmities of body and mind, as well as the the near prospects of eternity, drive them to God and religion for consolation and support. This has been the manner in which aged saints have spent their last days. Good old Barzillai, though rich and affluent and invited to join in the splendid entertainments of a Prince's court, declined the royal invitation, and rather choose to retire to domestic solitude and devotion. And who can say he acted out of character or made unwise choice. Simeon the aged, the just, and the devout,

patiently and prayerfully waited for the consolation of Israel, and for his own speedy and joyful departure out of the world. And the pious Anna spent the last days of her very long life in devout and religious exercises, to prepare herself for death and eternity. Such examples deserve the imitation of all aged christians, whose characters, professions and peculiar circumstances imperiously call upon them to wait submissively and prayerfully for their appointed change.

6. It appears from what has been said, that aged saints ought to be willing to die. They have enjoyed much good, suffered many trials, lost nearly all their former relatives and friends, are left alone in the world, and all things tend to draw their attention to death and eternity; and they have no plea to make for the protraction of life. There was a time in life when David could pray to God and say, "Take me not away in the midst of my days." Every aged christian has more reason to say to God. "I would not live alway; Lord now lettest thy servant depart in peace according to thy word." Death in itself is the king of terrors, and opens into an unseen and untried state of existence, which the most devout and aged christian may well contemplate with solemnity and awe, and tremble to launch into the boundless ocean of eternity. And though he is weary of the evils of life; yet all his tender ties to the world are not entirely dissolved. He has persons and objects, and interests to leave, which he ought to regard with pious solicitude and concern. He may be in a strait betwixt two, a desire to live, and a desire to die. But in his old age when his exertions and usefulness are failing, he ought to have a prevailing, though submissive desire to die. It argues too great attachment to the world, and too little preparation for death, in aged christians not to be willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. It becomes them no longer to mix with the world, but to retire in solitude, and prepare their unprepared hearts for the solemn scenes before them. God has carried them even to old age to give them an opportunity to perform the great and last act on the stage of life to the honor of religion, and for the consolation and benefit of those whom they leave behind.

7. The peculiar character and situation of aged christians call for their serious and particular attention to every instance of mortality, whether of the young or of the old. When they see others cut down in the morning of life, or in the midst of their days, enjoyments and hopes, their death calls upon them to recognize, with peculiar gratitude, the mercy of God in preserving their lives in the midst of the arrows of death, which have been constantly flying

around them, and causing multitudes to fall on their right hand and on their left. When they see their aged cotemporaries taken away while they are still left; their death admonishes them, that there is but a step between them and the grave. Though it may look strange, yet it is undoubtedly true that old age often brings on apathy or insensibility with respect to the awful event of death.—The young are generally more sensibly affected with any instance of mortality than the aged, who have been in deaths oft, and seen many of the dying and the dead. They are like veteran soldiers, who have been so familiar with death, that it has lost all its terror. But aged christians ought not to suffer such apathy and insensibility in respect to death, which they have still to experience. They ought to feel more indifferent to other scenes and objects, than other men, but not to death, which is just closing their probationary state, and fixing their condition for eternity.

ON THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In considering the work of the Divine Spirit, is proposed to inquire,

I. What are the offices which he, at present, performs in respect to men?

II. Through what *medium* does he perform these offices? And,

III. How far may his present operations be expected to *conform* to the established laws of the human mind?

One of the offices, which the Holy Spirit now performs for men, is to *enlighten* them. It is by his *enlightening* influences, that he awakens the thoughtless, alarms the secure, impresses a sense of the importance of religion, removes prejudices, and unfounded hopes, and convinces the sinner of his sin and guilt, and of the justice of God in his condemnation. It is by the same kind of influence, that he leads the saints onward in a knowledge of themselves, of God, and of Divine subjects, and that he impresses those truths, by means of which they grow in grace, and are fitted for heaven.

Another office of the Holy Spirit is that of *sanctifier.* Through his *sanctifying* influence, persons are made to love God, to acquiesce in his sovereignty, to repent of their sins, to believe in Christ, to love the cause and people of God, and to feel a holy delight in all the duties and services of religion. By this kind of influence, their hearts are changed; and dispositions are given them which are opposed to sin, in love with holiness, and conformed to the moral image of their maker.

Still another office which the Holy Spirit performs for his people, is that of *comforter.* This work of the Spirit, though intimately connected with the last mentioned, and growing out of it, is still, I think, distinct from it. Although happiness is intimately connected with holiness, yet it is not holiness; and the work of producing spiritual enjoyment, and that of producing holy affections, ought to be regarded as distinct operations of the Divine Spirit. It is in his office of *comforter*, that the Holy Spirit renders his people happy. He imparts to them a peace, over which the world has no direct power. He enables them to rejoice in God, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.—Let it now be inquired,

2. Through what *medium* does the Holy Spirit perform these important offices which have been mentioned? And in prosecuting this inquiry, I shall endeavor to show, that he performs them entirely through the medium of our *mental faculties.*—He *enlightens*, for instance, not supernaturally, but through the regular medium of the understanding and the conscience. It is by these faculties, that he impresses the sinner with his guilt and danger, and excites him to flee from the wrath to come. Through the same faculties also, he causes his people to grow in all spiritual knowledge, and sheds upon them that light of truth, by which they are sanctified, comforted, and saved.—In accomplishing his work as *sanctifier*, the Spirit operates through the medium of the *will.* There is no other possible way, in which he can accomplish this work. Love, penitence, submission, faith, and all the various exercises of holiness, are exercises of the will. How then can these be produced, except through the medium of the will?—The same kind of remark may be extended to the work of the Holy Spirit, as *comforter.* Spiritual comfort or enjoyment, is a feeling of the soul, which necessarily implies a distinct faculty of feeling. And it is through the medium of this faculty, whatever it may be, that the Spirit accomplishes his work, as *comforter.*

The truth of these remarks is so very obvious, as not to need, and scarcely to admit of proof. How is it possible that divine *light* should be let into the human mind, except through the medium of those faculties which alone are capable of receiving light? What is Divine light? It is truth, relating to Divine and moral subjects. But how is it possible, even for the Holy Spirit, to make us acquainted with such truth, and to impress it upon us, except through the medium of our understandings and consciences?—Holiness is a property exclusively of moral exercises—exercises of the will.—How is it possible then, that the Spirit should sanctify any person, or *make him holy*, except through the medium of the will?—And spiritual enjoyment, so far as it is independent of the will, and is a distinct feeling, necessarily implies a distinct faculty. And it can be only through the medium of this faculty, that spiritual enjoyment is produced, or that the Holy Spirit performs the office of a comforter. It is plain, therefore that in all the offices which the Holy Spirit is at present performing in respect to men, he operates entirely through the medium of their mental faculties.

The way is now prepared to inquire, in the third place, how far those operations of the Divine Spirit, of which we have spoken, are conformable to the established laws of the human mind. I would be far indeed from limiting the operations of the Holy Spirit. I know he is a Sovereign, who has the power, and the right, to do as he pleases. Still I am satisfied that the operations of the Spirit, now the age of miracles is past, may be expected, ordinarily, if not always to conform to the established laws of mind. This may be regarded as a just inference from what has been said. God, who gave us our faculties, has subjected them, in their operations to fixed laws.—He has chosen and established, that they shall operate in a particular way, rather than in any other way. Now we have seen that the Spirit accomplishes his work, entirely through the medium of these faculties. Shall we not suppose, therefore, that he conforms his operations, to the instituted laws by which these faculties are governed? One of two things presents itself as certain; he must either conform his operations to these laws; or he must go contrary to them, and for the time suspend them. But if he goes contrary to them, and suspends them; then his operation constitutes a continued series of miracles, and the age of miracles is not yet past. All, who are unwilling to adopt this supposition, will be led of necessity, to adopt the other, that the present operations of the Holy Spirit are conformed to the established laws of mind.

Nor is this supposition at all degrading to the work of the spirit but rather the contrary. For who established those general laws, to which our mental faculties are subject? It was the infinite Jehovah who formed our faculties, and who doubtless, has fixed the mode of their operation in the wisest manner. He has ordained that they shall operate in a particular way rather than in any other, because this is the best way. Is it then derogatory to the work of the Holy Spirit, to suppose that his operations upon the human mind are conformed to those wisely established rules? Or, would it not be degrading his work, to suppose that ordinarily, he violates these rules?

The design of these remarks, as must be evident to every candid reader, is not to call in question the reality of the peculiar work of the Spirit—or the necessity of this work, in order to salvation—or the proper sovereignty of the Spirit, in accomplishing it—or the efficacy of prayer, in procuring it; but merely to shew, that the work of the Holy Spirit is not miraculous—that it is performed through the medium of our mental faculties, and in conformity with the established laws of mind and that it will bear the investigation, as well of the enlightened philosopher, as of the christian. Nor are the principles, which have been established, mere speculation. They give rise to several reflections, in a greater or less degree practical, which will now be mentioned.

1. It follows from what has been said, that mental philosophy or an acquaintance with human nature, and with the established laws of the human mind, is very intimately connected with the science of theology. The science of theology relates, not only to God, but to the various dealings of God with men. Consequently the operations of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men, come directly within the scope of this important science. But these operations we have seen, are performed through the medium of the human faculties, and in conformity with the established laws of mind. It is impossible, therefore, to understand these spiritual operations and to understand *theology*, to which they belong, without some acquaintance with the philosophy of mind. The two sciences are very intimately connected—more so, than many religious teachers seem to have imagined—and so much so, that the former cannot be fully studied and comprehended, without a knowledge of the latter.

2. The subject shews us why, "the word of God" has been denomiated "the sword of the spirit." It is the appointed instrument by means of which the various operations of the Holy Spirit are performed. The Spirit operates, as we have seen through the medium of our faculties, and in conformity with the established laws by which they are regulated.—He enlightens, by opening and impressing truth on our minds, and he sanctifies and comforts, by means of motives and considerations adapted to these different offices. Now "the word of God" furnishes the very truths, and motives, and considerations which the Spirit uses, in all this high and momentuous concern. It is the instrument, with which he performs his operations and consequently may well be denominated "the sword of the spirit." It is the sword, with which he pricks the sinner to the heart; slays the man of sin; and wounds—to the saving of the soul.

3. We see in what manner *men* may co-operate with the Holy Spirit, in accomplishing his peculiar work. As he performs his work through the medium of our faculties, and in conformity with the established laws of mind there

is room, as we have seen for the instrumentality of the divine word —for the truths, the motives, and the considerations of the gospel. There is room and necessity for the means of grace; and these means *men* are able, and are required, to employ. They may be, and ought to be, "workers together with" the Divine Spirit, in pouring light upon the blinded understanding; impressing obligation upon the slumbering conscience; exhibiting motives in favor of holiness; and urging considerations adapted to edify and comfort the people of God.

4. Since the operations of the Divine Spirit are so performed, as to render it requisite for men to use the means of grace; it should be the study of those, who are called by their sacred profession to dispense these means, to adapt them in the wisest manner. It cannot be doubted that there is room here, for the exercise of much skill and judgment. It cannot be doubted (other things being equal) that the most wisely adapted means will uniformly be the most successful. There are good reasons why they should be so. The Holy Spirit, on whose agency every thing depends, operates, as we have seen, through the medium of our faculties, and in conformity with the established laws of mind. He awakens, alarms, and convinces of sin, by exhibiting truth to the understanding and impressing it on the conscience; and he converts and sanctifies, in view of the powerful motives of the gospel. Now as men are laborers together with him, in this work of exhibiting and impressing truth, and in presenting and urging motives; can it be doubted that man labours the most efficiently, and will labor the most successfully, who most clearly exhibits Divine light—most powerfully impresses truth—most persuasively urges motives—and who adapts all the means he employs in the wisest manner.

The means employed should be wisely adapted, in respect to the *matter* of them. They should be enlightening, impressive, persuasive, in themselves; and the more so, the better.—They should be wisely adapted, also in respect to the circumstances of time and place. Said our Savior to his disciples, on a certain occasion, "I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them *now*."— The speeches which Paul made at Athens, and at Jerusalem, and before King Agrippa, are all very different one from another, and neither of them could have been substituted in place of the other without the most glaring impropriety. And the means of grace should be wisely adapted, in respect to the particular manner of employing them. Every lawful expedient should be resorted to, to gain and secure attention to means. Unless they are attended to, however excellent they may be in themselves, they certainly can do no good. By original and striking views of subjects —by uncommon and unexpected modes of address—and in every proper way—those who are charged with dispensing the means of grace, should endeavour to render them impressive. There is a spot in every sinner's mind under the gospel—it is the spot which, in the ordinary course of means, is most exposed—which it may be expected has long ago become perfectly callous. The arrows of truth have continued to fall on it till they make no impression.—Now it is to little purpose that ministers continue preaching and preaching, at this hard place in the heart. They must level their arrows in new directions, and endeavour to find some tenderer part. Achilles was slain by the arrow of Paris, although vulnerable only in his heel. No religious means will be likely to benefit the stupid, careless sinner, unless they wound him. Peter's hearers were "pricked in the heart."—And it is desirable, that religious teachers, at the present day should be so skilful as to be able to "affect the heart," by the truths they dispense.

5. It may be gathered from what has been said, that much skill and judgment—much acquaintance with human nature, and with the established laws of mind—as well as much experience in divine things—are requisite in order to qualify a person to direct, in the most proper manner, a revival of religion. Revivals of true religion are the work of the Holy Spirit. They are seasons, when his operations are specially and gloriously exhibited in awakening, convincing, and converting sinners, and in quickening and comforting the people of God. But in these seasons, as in all others, the Spirit operates through the medium of the human faculties, and in conformity with the established laws of mind.—And in these seasons as in all others there is room and necessity for the co-operation of men. And those who are called at such times to co-operate with the Divine Spirit, in dispensing the word of life, and giving direction to the work of God, need themselves to be directed, in a peculiar degree by "that wisdom which is from above." Ignorance or error on their part, may be even more fatal than avowed opposition. Mistakes may be made which can never be rectified and which will be productive of incalculable evils.

When appearances indicate that a revival has commenced, it should be a principal object to *keep up*, and *increase* the impressions which have been made. These impressions once lost, will seldom be regained, and they leave the heart harder than at the first. The particular state of the revival, and, as far as possible of every individual interested in it, should be known by the religious teacher, so that every word spoken by him, might be a word in season. On this account, he should use all prudent means, to induce those who are awakened to take a stand, and to draw from them a free expression of their feelings. Care should also be taken that the work be not too rapidly hastened. Addresses to the passions should be cautiously avoided, and the excitement should not be pushed either farther or faster, than the clear light of truth will carry it. There is a degree of excitement, beyond which the human faculties, in their present state, cannot go, and in which they cannot long be sustained. They will soon begin to droop, and their energy will be relaxed. For this reason, there is a time, in every revival of religion, when the work is at its height— a season which has not unfitly been denominated its *crisis*. This season once past, the glory and power of the revival are usually gone. Little more can be done in it than to gather in the gleanings of the harvest. Great care should therefore be taken that the work be not prematurely hastened to its crisis, and in this way ended.

My readers, I trust, will not be offended, that I am disposed to look at the sacred subject of revivals of religion, with rather a philosophical eye. I am doing, as I hope, no discredit to the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit. This certainly is a work, in which I believe, and in which I glory. I rather think, that were revivals of religion more studied, and better understood, especially in their relation to the philosophy of mind; they would be more frequent, more lasting, and the fruits of them would be more abundant and glorious.

6. The subject suggests some reasons why revivals of religion have not been permanent. As they are the work of the Holy Spirit, the prime reason for their cessation, is the *withdrawing of his influences.* The Holy Spirit is grieved away. This reason for the cessation of a revival is a *criminal* one—one which ought not to exist—and in view of which it becomes Christians to be deeply humbled.—But there is another reason for the fact under consideration, which is rather *natural* than moral, and which does not necessarily imply criminality. Revivals of religion, are attended perhaps always, with more or less unnatural excitement of the animal system. The animal spirits have an unusual flow, and a high degree of mere animal feeling is experienced. Now it is not possible, in the nature of the case, that this species of excitement should be perpetual. It would be a miracle if it should. There is no religion in it, while it lasts; and it need not be expected to last very long. The unnatural excitement will subside, and for a

time, the animal system may be expected to sink as much below its usual state, as it has been raised above it. These changes, which result from our very constitutions, and are not directly of a moral or religious nature, ought never to exclude the love of God from our hearts; though often, doubtless, they become the *occasion* of doing it. They furnish no sufficient excuse for declension in holiness, or for the indulgence of sin.

7. If the Holy Spirit operates through the medium, and in the manner which has been described, then that *religious experience*, of which no rational account can be given, ought ever to be suspected. The Holy Spirit is the author of all true religious experience, but in producing it, he operates in a rational manner; and those who are the subjects of his saving operations can give a reasonable account of the views and exercises of their minds. The Spirit *enlightens*, but it is with the light of truth; and those, on whose understandings and consciences the truth is impressed, can mention the particular truths which impress them. The Spirit sanctifies, but it is in view of motives; and all who are truly sanctified can state the motives, in view of which their hearts have been excited to exercises of holiness. The Spirit also *comforts* the children of God, but it is by means of considerations adapted to this purpose; and those who are in the enjoyment of spiritual comforts can be at no loss what these considerations are. The experience and the hopes of such are rationally founded, and they can render a *reason* of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. And those exercises and hopes, of which a rational account cannot be given, there is no reason to believe will abide the scrutiny of the final day.

8. It appears from what has been said, that much of the mystery which has been drawn around the work of the Holy Spirit, may be safely removed.—It is not discreditable to the piety of Christians, that this subject has been regarded as a sacred one—too sacred almost to be trusted with mortal hands, or to be looked at with any thing like a philosophical eye. On this account a kind of awful mystery has been drawn around it, which, instead of heightening, has the rather served to obscure its glory. It is indeed a sacred subject; but not too sacred to be carefully and candidly investigated.—It is not too sacred to be understood, so far as it is capable of being understood by men. There is no virtue in wrapping it up, as too good to be looked at; but on the contrary, the utmost danger.—On no subject is ignorance more to be deprecated; as on no subject will mistakes be more likely to prove fatal. The work of the Holy Spirit may be, and ought to be, diligently studied. It is a study from which the greatest advanta-

ges may be expected to result.

The remarks which have been made, may serve to shew us our *dependance* upon the Holy Spirit. Naturally, we are in a state of complete moral *darkness.* We have eyes but we see not. We have understandings, but, in respect to things purely spiritual, they are perverted and blind. We have consciences, but they are in a great measure stupified and seared.

Under these circumstances, how much do we need the Holy Spirit to *enlighten* us. How much do we need his divine assistance, to prepare our minds for the truth, and truth for our minds, and to impress upon us those considerations without a knowledge of which we must perish for ever.—Naturally too, our hearts are *unsanctified.* We are capable of loving God, repenting of sin, and becoming holy; but we are wholly averse to holiness, and unwilling to do our duty. How much then do we need the Holy Spirit, to make us willing in the day of his power. How much do we need his *sanctifying* influence, to make us possessors of that "holiness, without which no man can see the Lord."—Naturally also, we are as *miserable*, as we are sinful. Disappointed in our search after happiness, and dissatisfied with ourselves, we "are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." How much then do we need the Divine Spirit as our *comforter.* How much do we need those spiritual consolations, with which the stranger doth not intermeddle, and which the world can neither bestow nor destroy.—Indeed our dependance on the Holy Spirit is entire. Without his influence, neither the word of truth, nor the blood of the cross, can ever save us. Without his influence, we are blinded, depraved and miserable in this life, and must be miserable for ever. P.

For the Christian Magazine.

A LETTER TO A MINISTER.

Attleborough, Aug. 9th 1815.

Rev. Sir,

I feel wholly at a loss, how to introduce the subject upon which I wish to write. You will therefore, be pleased to excuse me, if I do it very abruptly, by relating a few simple facts, in order to explain my motive for addressing a letter to a stranger. In the autumn of 1811, I lost a beloved brother by death. I had for many months viewed the tyrant advancing with a slow, but steady pace; and I at length saw his dreadful work performed. My heart rose against God. I wished him deprived of the power to punish. I would gladly have hurled him from his throne. I found I was willing to join earth and hell in opposing the execution of justice upon sinners. These feelings were of short duration. They shocked me and left an impression of the total depravity of my heart. The blindness of my mind and my stupidity in not realizing my guilt and danger gave me uneasiness. I found my petitions for mercy were nothing but mockery. I felt desirous of having a particular interest in the prayers of some one who I thought was pious. I was unwilling to make such a request to any, with whom I was acquainted, partly from a fear, that I should deceive them, making them think I was a *convinced* sinner, when I knew I was not; and partly from an unwillingness to being questioned concerning my feelings in regard to religion. I spent many hours in thinking what I should do. I at length determined to write to you, Sir; but how should I do it without being discovered? I concluded to disguise my handwriting, to send it without name or date; requesting my brother to put it into the Post-Office; evading his questions concerning its contents.

From that time until June 1815 —I was far from enjoying life.— I constantly felt that something was wanting in order to my being happy. I felt that I had a hard heart and a blind mind; and that I was far from righteousness. I never considered myself the subject of genuine conviction, but felt anxious that I might be. I thought much of the letter, was desirous of knowing, if it were received, but at length concluded, that provided it were, I should never be benefitted by the prayers, which were made on that account, expecting they had been answered in some one else.

When you, Sir, came to Attleborough and preached on Saturday near my father's, I attended and listened attentively; but felt nothing, until these words were uttered, "they must be broken hearted— they must die—let them feel what else they may—let them do what else they will, they have not taken one step towards heaven." I know I had never felt this broken-heartedness for sin, which was spoken of. I had often thought there was no merit in my religious performances; but I had never felt it before. I seemed like one cut off from every support and was looking around in vain for something on which to lean. I returned home and endeavored to recollect the sermon; but my mind was too much agitated to remember any thing distinctly, except those two sentences. I awoke in the morning, feeling unhappy at the thought of spending another Sabbath, as I had ever done without understanding what I read, or feeling what I heard. I saw no way, in which I should be benefitted by the preaching on that day. I thought that all the means had been used in vain with me which were generally taken to convince and convert sinners. I wished for conviction of sin and danger. Yet I was conscious, that I was armed against it.

While I was meditating upon my unhappy situation, the thought occurred to me, why not commit my ways unto the Lord, rest in him and wait patiently for him. I felt that I could willingly do it. I wished to be made entirely holy. And I was desirous of entering immediately into God's service. I asked myself, if I were willing, after enjoying his presence here, to be cast from it for ever. I shrunk from it. The thought returned, am I not willing God's will should be done? I thought I could cheerfully commit my all into his hands, leaving the event with him. My proud heart quickly suggested to me, that these feelings were right. The thought distressed me. I mentally said what can be done with such a heart as mine? I took up the bible and opening to the 10th chapter of Acts, I read these words, "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Who, thought I, can tell *me* what I ought to do? My mind was immediately directed to you, sir. You had been the means of convincing me, that I had not taken one step towards heaven. I thought, perhaps, you would now tell me, how I might. I soon found I made great dependance upon it. I felt in haste to go to meeting. It being early, I again took my Bible and opened to the 22d chapter of Luke. I read with indifference, until I came to the 31 & 32 verses. My heart was affected. I thought them gracious words, but do not recollect of applying them to myself. I went to meeting and heard the three sermons, which were preached on that day. I was prepared to hear with attention, expecting to learn what I might do. In the improvement of the morning discourse I was told to do my duty, if I remember right, without regard to consequences. This thought immediately occurred to me, who can tell me what my duty is? I asked myself, if I were willing, that Jesus Christ should be my teacher and do for me and direct me in every respect. I thought I was. The character of God, as exhibited in the second sermon, appeared pleasing. I was glad, that God was a being, possessing all power. I had seen enough of my own heart to convince me, that all, which was said in the third sermon concerning the natural depravity of man was true.

Meditating one day that week upon my own feelings, while sitting under your preaching, the letter, which I had addressed to you, Sir, three years and an half before, rushed into my mind. I had not thought of it for many months.—It gave me pleasure to think it were possible you had received it and that your prayers were answered in regard to me. I recollected, that I resolved when I wrote the letter, that if ever I had the least hope, that I was reconciled to the will of God, I would make you, Sir, acquainted with it. But I scarcely knew.

that I had any; and I was altogether at a loss to know how to express it. The feelings that I have had, that I hoped were right, have been so few, so faint, and of so short continuance, that I know not, whether I am the friend or the enemy of God. I feel none of that opposition, which I formerly had to the divine government; but I cannot determine, whether it is resignation or stupidity. If I have ever been the subject of your prayers, Sir, I beg the continuance of them; if not, may I now be particularly remembered. Begging your pardon, Sir, for the liberty I have taken, I subscribe myself with sentiments of respect, yours,

Sophia Bullock.

As the person who wrote the preceding letter has been a number of years in the world of spirits and was greatly endeared to her christian acquaintance, as well as to her bereaved relatives, it has been thought proper to add her name; that her letter may appear and be known, as it was written by her own hand. The letter that she sent to the Post-Office, was received and was probably as trying to him who received it, as the occasion of it was to the writer. The writer was unknown, until the reception of the preceding letter. May every reader pray with humility and perseverance for distressed, and perishing sinners. T. W.

From the Utica Repository.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—BY BUNYANUS.

CHAPTER IV.

Now I beheld that the pilgrims had arrived at the house of the interpreter, where they knocked, and one opened the door, and inquired who they were, and what they wanted. Then Thoughtful told him they were pilgrims who entered this way at the Wicket gate, and were bid to call at the house of the Interpreter, to be more fully introduced into the King's statutes. So they were desired to walk in, and were introduced into the presence of the Interpreter, a venerable old man, of a grave but pleasant countenance, who desired them to be seated, and then inquired who they were, and how they had come in at the gate, and what they had met with by the way; and they told him. Then he said,

In.. You did well in not exchanging your books with Mr. Plausible. He is an impostor, and an enemy to pilgrims; and by good words and fair speeches he deceiveth the hearts of the simple. He knows that none are approved by the Lord of the way, but such as love his statutes, and obey them. He desires, therefore, to keep them ignorant of these, or to make them believe they are different from what they are. For this purpose he wishes to deprive them of their books, or destroy their confidence in them. And if he cannot prevail upon him to take his mutilated and erroneous copies, he often fills their minds with doubts as to the correctness of those they have, and greatly hinders their improvement and comfort in perusing them. As for his pretended Improved Version, it was indeed made by men of learning and abilities; but they were men who wished to degrade the character of the Prince Immanuel, and rob him of his honors. They wished also to misrepresent the character, and government, and designs of the King, and make it appear that he would not destroy his enemies and burn up their cities with unquenchable fire. His other copies are more or less erroneous, in order to suit the different inclinations of those who may be willing to exchange. That made by John the Itinerant, does not indeed, like some of them degrade the Prince Immanuel to a mere fallible, peccable man, nor deny the existence of the Holy Comforter, nor the everlasting punishment of the King's enemies; but if you should compare it with your own copies, you would perceive that it is intended to conceal many of the doctrines which your copies teach, and to favour those which he laboured to establish; and that it differs from yours in so many places, that its tendency must be to weaken the confidence of the feeble minded in any copy, and make them believe that there is no dependance to be placed on the King's statute book; and thus prepare them to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, and become a prey to every deceiver.

Ardent. I confess that I was too much inclined to listen to Mr. Plausible, and was disposed to receive his books. But I desire to be thankful that I have escaped the danger.

Th. I wish to know what ground we have to depend upon the correctness of our present copies of the King's statute book, that my confidence in it may not again be shaken; for I confess that Mr. Plausible's discourse made some impression upon my mind also.

In. As to the correctness of the original copy of which your copies are a translation, I would observe, that the most learned of the King's servants have carefully compared all the copies that could be found in the different parts of the world, and taken down a statement of every variation, even in the manner of spelling the same words, and published the result of their labours; from which it appears, that the copies in present use, cannot differ, in any important particular, from those which were written by the King's scribes. And as to the translation you have, it was the joint labour of forty-seven of the most learned of the King's servants that could be found, in a learned age, and is the copy distributed by all those corporations which the King has caused to be established for the wider circulation of his statute book, in which corporations are included the most learned of the King's servants now living. So that you may judge yourselves whether there are likely to be any important defects in it. No; whatever Mr. Plausible may pretend, you may depend upon the copy you have, and receive whatever it contains, as the pure word of the King.

Th. I wish to be informed also how I shall know what is the true sense of the King's statute book; for I find that it is interpreted differently.

In. The most important requisite, in order to arrive at the true sense of the King's statute book, is a humble, teachable disposition. The Prince Immanuel hath said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." A disobedient heart is the only important difficulty in the way of a right understanding of the King's book. If you feel your own ignorance, and are willing to be taught by the King, and to receive and obey whatever he teaches, without murmurings and disputings, you will be likely to find no difficulty.

Th. But I have heard it alleged, that the King's statute book is very dark and difficult to be understood; and that is in vain for persons of common understanding to try to know what it means.

In. That is the language of those who are too indolent to search, or who are disposed to disobey. Remember, that it is a revelation from the King, not merely for the use of the learned, but for those of common understanding also. It is an impeachment of his wisdom and goodness to suppose it is not well adapted to answer the purposes for which it was given.

Th. By what rules of interpretation shall I determine what is the true sense of any passage?

In. By the same rules that you determine what is the true sense of any thing that is said to you. Consider the connexion, and what is the subject of discourse, and let words be understood according to their plainest and most obvious import when used in such a connexion.

Th. Are not the same expressions used sometimes figuratively, and sometimes literally?

In. Yes: But the connexion will always decide. If they are used figuratively, the connexion will make it manifest; and it will show also what is the meaning of the figure. If the connexion furnishes no reason why the expression should be understood figuratively, it ought to be understood literally. You must not think you may understand an expression figuratively or literally at your pleasure. This would destroy the use of the King's book altogether, and make every man's own fancy his rule.

Th. I have heard it alleged also that some universal terms, such as *all*, *every*, *forever*, *everlasting*, are some times used in a limited, and sometimes in an unlimited sense. How shall I know which sense to attach to them.

In. All words which have an unlimited sense, ought to be understood in that sense, unless there is something in the connection which plainly fixes a limitation.

Th. How is it then that the advocates of error often seem to have so much from the King's book to support their opinions?

In. Most of the advocates of error believe some truth, as well as some error. They can bring proof from the King's book, to support every truth they believe. And when they wish to oppose any truth, they usually state it wrong, so that it has the appearance of an error; and thus they seem to bring much against it from the King's book. They also wrest what is contained in the King's book, so as to make it seem to bear upon the point in dispute; or they try to keep the point in dispute out of sight, and set up something else, which is a truth, instead of it, and having proved that, they pretend they have gained the point in dispute, when, in reality, they have not touched it at all. By such arts, they often impose upon the credulous and unthinking.

Ard. I trust we shall be disposed to take the King's book for our guide, and embrace whatever it contains. I long to see the rare and profitable sights which pilgrims have formerly seen here.

So the Interpreter took the pilgrims into his significant rooms, and showed them those things which had been seen by the pilgrim Christian, and also those which had been seen by Christiana and her company. After this was done and they had conversed upon them sufficiently, he took them to see other things, which he thought might be profitable to them.

First he took them to the door of a prison where, looking through the grates, they saw a man made fast in irons; and they saw also that the doors of the prison were locked and barred upon him?—Then there came one who looked through the grates, and called to the man, and bid him come out and offered him a great reward if he would do so. Then said the man why do you mock me? You see I cannot come out, for I am fast bound in chains; and the doors of the prison are closed upon me.—Alas I would gladly come out if I could.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this?

In. This shows the absurd conduct of many who teach that the Prince Immanuel died for the elect only, and that all men are under a *natural inability* to comply with the invitations of the gospel; and yet address those invitations to all indiscriminately, and urge them to comply; when according to their own scheme, they *cannot* comply if they would.

But, follow me to another apartment.

So they followed him to another apartment, where also there was a prison, with a man in it as before. And while they looked, one came and threw open the prison doors, and went to the prisoner, knocked off his chains, and set him on his feet, so that he walked about freely. He then invited him to come out, and offered him great rewards if he would comply. But the man answered, I love my prison, and *cannot* leave it; I despise your rewards, and *cannot* accept them. I *cannot* come out.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this?

In. This case illustrates the real situation of the sinner. What the Prince Immanuel has done, has unbarred his prison doors, and knocked off his chains. He *can* come out, if he will. But he *will not.* He loves his prison, and and is *unwilling* to leave it. He despises the rewards which are offered, and *will not* accept them. He also says he *cannot* come out; but it is plain, that his *cannot* is only a *will not* His *inability* to come out is wholly a *moral inability.* It is nothing but disinclination.

Then the Interpreter took them to another place, and bid them look into two dark rooms, and tell which of them was clean. Then said the pilgrims, we cannot tell; they appear to be both alike.

Then the Interpreter, called for one to bring a light, and bid them look again, which they did. And they saw that one of the rooms was entirely clean; but the other was extremely foul; loathsome reptiles were crawling upon the floor, and spiders, bloated with poison, were creeping upon the walls, and dangling upon the ceiling.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this?

In. This illustrates one effect of the faithful preaching of the gospel. Before the light of truth comes, men may appear to be perfectly alike, and seem to have the same temper of heart; as the two rooms appeared to be alike, while no light shined into them. But the light of truth makes manifest. When the truths of the gospel are clearly exhibited, those who have a clean heart will be made manifest; and those whose hearts are foul as this room will be made manifest also. And whereas the bringing in of the light, was not what made the room foul, but it only discovered the foulness which was in it already; so the clear exhibition of the light of truth is not to be found fault with, as though it made men so much worse, as it soon discovers them to be.

Then he took them to another place where was a dark room, and a man entering with a light in his hand; a thief, who was there for the purpose of plunder, stepped towards him, and endeavored to strike the light out of his hand. But when he had made several attempts to do that, without success, he began to strike at the man who bore it, that he might knock him down if he could.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this?

In. This illustrates another effect of the faithful preaching of the gospel. When the light of truth is brought in, and begins to discover the true character of the wicked, as they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, they hate the light & try to extinguish it. They deny the truth and try to make others disbelieve it. But when these attempts do not succeed, and they cannot extinguish the light nor conceal themselves from it, their enmity is roused against him who bears it, and they try to get him out of the way, that the light may no longer shine, to disturb them in the execution of their designs.

Then he took them to another place where was one playing upon a musical instrument, to a room full of people. But they saw that the people paid very little attention to the music, being busily engaged in conversing with each other, or in taking notice of each other's dress, or in exhibiting their own; and some of them seemed to be very drowsy and almost asleep Then the Interpreter bid the pilgrims ask the people how they liked the music; and they all answered that they liked it exceedingly; they thought it was very fine indeed; they had never heard better. So the pilgrims kept looking, and soon after, the whole company seemed to be all attention to the music; every one was awake, every noise was hushed, every eye was fixed, and every ear was open. Then the Interpreter bid the pilgrims again ask the people how they liked the music; and now they answered different ways. Some declared they had never heard it before but liked it well. Some said they had before only heard a few notes at a time, and they liked it now better than ever. But many of them exclaimed against it, as the worst they had heard. The instrument they said was out of tune, and made dreadful discord; and the performer discovered a strange want of taste. They thought he had altered unaccountably for the worse, (though the pilgrims had perceived no alteration;) and some said, if he did not soon mend his hand, they would hear him no longer.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this?

In. This illustrates another effect of the faithful preaching of the gospel. When a preacher who has the character of preaching well, comes to a congregation who are in a stupid state, having their minds occupied with worldly pleasure and amusements, they are ready enough to think he preaches well, and to join in extolling his performances, though they had not in reality heard them so as to be qualified to form any judgment. But afterwards, when their attention is excited, and they hear so as to understand what he preaches, those who really love the gospel like it better than before; and some, who have never heard with serious attention and self-application, having now the truth set home to their consciences and their hearts, and feeling its sanctifying power, are well pleased. But those who really hate the truth, are now greatly displeased; and remembering that they had before expressed their approbation, they think the change is in the preacher, though in reality he preaches the same truths; and many of them are now so much provoked, that they declare they will not hear such things any longer, though they are the very same things they joined in commending a little while before.

AN ADDRESS TO MOTHERS ON THE EARLY EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

On this subject I wish to address myself particularly to mothers, for they are commonly intrusted with the most important part of education. The temper and disposition, the habit of obedience and the first principles of religion, should all be formed during the first six or seven years, when the child is principally under the care of the mothers.—Women, if they are what they ought to be, seem particularly suited to this task, from the tenderness & gentleness of their dispositions, and the happy art which they possess of gaining affection, and softening authority by kindness. But they are apt to fall into some errors from which I wish to guard them. They do not always consider the absolute necessity of teaching a child obedience from the very first. Before he can speak, he should learn this lesson, which sooner or later must be learned by every created being. From infancy he should be taught that nothing is to be gained by passion and crying. This is attended with but very little difficulty, if it be done, before any bad habits are formed, and custom will soon make it easy to the child, but we often see mothers especially among the poor who never attempt to govern their children till their little passions have gained so much strength that they know not how to conquer them except by methods which would never have been necessary, if they had been taught obedience from the very first. If a child has been accustomed from infancy to do what he is bid; and if his little heart has been gained by the kindness of a prudent mother, her displeasure will be his punishment, her praise will be his reward. Though language and blows are almost always proofs that the parent did not know how to govern. It is observed of one sect of christians, who have a remarkable command over their passions, that they never raise their voices in speaking to their children, nor ever permit them to speak loud to each other. The good effects of this rule will be evident to all who steadily pursue it. The child will attend to the meaning of your words instead of being frightened with the sound of them and will soon know that he is governed like a reasonable creature, and not like a brute beast, which has no understanding.

This point being once gained and the child being accustomed to immediate and ready obedience without dispute or murmur, it remains that you use this power for his real good. Carefully watch the very first appearance of any thing wrong in his disposition and check it immediately.—Carefully guard against deceit.—Teach him to own his faults; and when he does so, forgive them; but convince him that they are faults, and must be rooted out.—Above all give him early impressions of religion; teach him to fear God, and to tremble at the punishment prepared for the wicked in the next world. This is what we all *ought* to fear.

Ch. Observer.

ANECDOTE OF DIDEROT.

In the account which the Abbe Barruel gives of the closing scene of Diderot's life, is the following interesting anecdote.

This infidel philosopher had a christian servant to whom he had been kind, and who had waited on him in his last illness. The servant took a tender interest in the melancholy situation of his master, who was just about to leave this world, without any preparation for another. Though a young man, he ventured one day when he was engaged about his master's person, to remind him that he had a soul, and to admonish him in a respectful way, not to lose the last opportunity of attending to its welfare. Diderot heard him with attention, melted into tears, and thanked him. He even consented to let the young man introduce a clergyman;—whom he would probably have continued to admit to his chamber, if his infidel friends would have suffered the clergyman to repeat his visits.

This story may furnish us with a useful lesson. We are often deterred from an endeavour to do good, by conceiving that the attempts will be vain. Yet surely it becomes us to beware, that we lose no opportunity of being serviceable to another, especially in his highest concerns, by an idea of the improbability of success. We may be mistaken in that respect. Christian charity, let it also be remembered, is not that cold calculating spirit which weighs exertion before it makes it, and which fears to venture upon an act of benevolence, least it should be thrown away. True charity has its eye more on what its object may lose for want of assistance, than on what itself may expend in vain.—*ibid.*

***OMICRON has been received.

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SERMON.

Job 36, 22.—*Who teacheth like him?*

Job's afflictions were truly providential. He had long enjoyed great prosperity, and had no previous warning of approaching adversity. His troubles came suddenly and unexpectedly and rapidly, like the waves of the sea, billow after billow, until he was completely overwhelmed. He viewed them as flowing directly from the hand of God, and upon this ground, he implored the sympathy and compassion of his friends. "Have pity upon me, have pity upom me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." His friends saw and pitied him. Though they mistook his character, yet they did not mistake his condition and duty. They said many things to him, which were very suitable to his trying situation. But Elihu, who spoke last, said most, and what was most to the purpose. He undertook to speak on God's behalf; and what he said respecting the character and conduct of God, was both pertinent and instructive. He represented God as supremely great and good, and as designing to teach mankind very important lessons of instruction, by the dispensation of providence. He considered Job as in God's school; and admonished him to hear the rod, and him who had appointed it. "Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him." This question carries in it a strong affirmation, that God is the best of instructors; and its full meaning may be comprized in this general observation:

God himself teaches men better than they can teach one another. To illustrate this truth, I shall,

I. Consider what is to be understood by God's teaching men himself; and,

II. Make it appear, that he can teach them better than they can teach one another.

I. Let us consider what is to be understood by God's teaching men himself.

"Who teacheth like him?" This mode of expression plainly implies, that God is a distinct and independent teacher. He can teach of himself, without human aid or instrumentality. It is true, he hath appointed human teachers, and commonly makes use of them, to convey instruction to their fellow creatures. He requires the aged to teach the young; the knowing to teach the ignorant, and the ministers of the gospel to teach their people. But he is able to supersede all these human teachers, and take the work of instruction into his own hands, and sometimes he sees it to be proper and necessary to do it. He never does it, however, only when there is something which requires his special interposition and exertion. He employs human instructions in all cases in which they will answer his purposes. But when these fail, he goes above them, and instructs mankind himself independently of all other teachers; and on this account, he claims to be the supreme Teacher. "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God, which *teacheth thee to profit*." And of the same people he says again, "Though I *taught* them rising up early, and *teaching* them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction." Thus God taught his people of old, and thus he continues to teach mankind himself. I now proceed,

II. To make it appear, that he can teach men better than they can teach one another.

"Who teacheth like him?" Elihu viewed God as the best of teachers. And this will appear to be true, if we consider the following observations.

I. God can teach the most *universally*. He can teach all sorts of men, without exception. He is greater than the greatest, higher than the highest, and wiser than the wisest of his intelligent creatures. There are many men, whose abilities, whose stations, whose interests, and whose hearts place them above all human instruction. But God is infinitely above all such persons, and as able to teach them as any of the lower ranks in life. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and able to teach the greatest potentates on earth. This Elihu takes notice of in the context. "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous; but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them forever, and they are exalted. And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in the cords of affliction; then he *sheweth them their work;* and their transgressions, that they have exceeded. *He openeth also their ear to discipline.*" God often taught the kings of Israel. When David ordered the people to be numbered, and Joab could not persuade him to give up his ambitious purpose, God effectually taught him humility and submission. When Hezekiah's heart was lifted up, God laid him upon a bed of pining sickness, and taught him his frailty and mortality. God undertook to instruct Nebuchadnezzar the haughty king of Babylon, and humbled him to the dust. And he made Belshazzar, who had defied him to tremble before him. God can teach kings and emperors as easily as the lowest and meanest of their subjects. He can teach those who think they know too much to be instructed by their fellow mortals. He taught Solomon the wisest of men the folly, and vanity, and evil of his supreme love to the world. He taught Paul who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and who had despised the instructions of Stephen, the knowledge of his own heart. He taught Manasseh humility and self-abasement, after he had rejected the instructions of his father, and of the priests and prophets in Jerusalem. And he taught his own people in Babylon what none of his priests and prophets were able to teach them before. Thus God is able to teach all descriptions of men, whether high or low, whether learned or unlearned, whether vain, profligate, or obstinate. In this respect there is none can teach like him.

2. God can teach men the most *easily*. He has them all in his hands, and a perfect access to their minds. He can always place them in a proper situation to be taught. He can bring them into any situation he pleases, and turn their attention to whatever objects he sees best to instruct them. How easily did he strip Job of his wealth, of his friends, of all the objects of his affection, and fix his whole attention upon himself, which prepared him in the best manner to receive instruction? How easily did he carry the sons of Jacob into Egypt, and there teach them humility and penitence for their inhumanity and cruelty towards their brother Joseph? And how easily can he shift the situation and condition of any person in the world, and teach him the lesson he needs to learn? Whatever is necessary to be done in order to teach men, God can easily do. If it be necessary to make them rich, he can easily do it. If it be necessary to make them poor, he can easily do it. If it be necessary to put them into different stations, he can easily do it. Or if it be necessary to put them into any new, untried circumstances, he can easily do it. And when they are placed in a proper state to receive instruction, he can, with perfect ease, give them that kind and degree of instruction he pleases. Men often find great difficulty in teaching one another. They sometimes exhaust both their bodily and mental strength in labouring to teach one another, and without much or any affect. But God can teach thousands and mil-

lions at once, with the utmost ease. Neither dulness, nor obstinacy can be the least impediment to his instructions. Those who have resisted all other teachers, and rejected all other instruction, become quite teachable under his wise and powerful teaching. He can open the eye, the ear, and all the powers of the mind, to receive instruction. He can take the scales from the eyes, and the veil from the heart, and pour light and conviction through all the avenues of the mind.

3. God can teach men the most seasonably. They know not the best seasons to teach one another. Their instructions are often entirely lost by being mistimed.—But God always knows how to time instructions. He never instructs too soon, nor too late, but always teaches when there is the most proper occasion for it. He knows every person, and all his outward circumstances, and internal state of mind. Of course, he knows the exact time, when any of mankind need his special instruction. He sees proper to teach some when they are young, and some when they are old.—He sees proper to teach some whilst they are rising, and some after they have risen to distinction in the world. He sees proper to teach some in the height of their prosperity, and others in the height of their obstinacy and wickedness. God often judges very differently from men, in respect to the proper seasons of instructing: He often chooses those seasons which men consider as the most improper. But he always judges right in regard to the most proper seasons of instructing every particular person. He took the most proper season to teach Jacob.—He was in the midst of prosperity, and the greatest of all the men of the east. This prepared him to feel the weight and hear the voice of the rod of instruction. When Isaac was in the flower of his age, and engrossed his father's affections; then was a proper time for God to try and teach Abraham submission. When Moses was come to years, and began to raise his views and hopes to the throne of Egypt; then was a proper time for God to blast his expectations, take him from the court of Pharaoh, and teach him humility in a solitary wilderness. When Charles V. had reached the summit of his wishes and triumphed over Europe; then was a proper time, for God to seize his mind, shut him up in a monastery, and teach him in silence the folly and madness of his life. When the Earl of Rochester had prostituted his noble talents to the vilest purposes; then was a proper time for God himself to teach him what no human instructions could teach him. In all other instances of this kind, God always chooses the most proper seasons to teach those, who need his special instruction. He constantly keeps his eye upon

every one of the children of men, and observes their characters, stations, and particular circumstances; and if needs be, he takes this, that, and the other person into his own school; to teach him in his own way. Sometimes he sees it proper to teach a whole nation at once; sometimes to teach a whole city; sometimes to teach a whole family; and sometimes to teach a single individual.

4. God teaches the most effectually. Other teachers may labour in vain and spend their strength for nought. Paul may plant and Apollos water, without any success. The best human instructions may be lost upon those, to whom they are given. If persons are unwilling to be instructed, no human efforts can teach them. Any person may if he pleases, put himself out of the reach of instruction or shut his mind against it. Observation and experience unitedly teach us that many remain ignorant, who enjoy the means of light and conviction. But when God himself teaches, he teaches effectually. He has a supreme and absolute dominion over the minds of men. Every power and faculty of their souls are under his immediate influence. And even their hearts are in his hand, and he can turn them whithersoever he pleases. He can open the eyes of the blind, and make them see. He can open the ears of the deaf, and make them hear.—He can awaken the hopes and fears of the stupid, and make them feel. He can do still more, he can soften the hearts of the hardened, and make them yield to his instructions. This has been visibly manifested in numerous instances. He made Pharaoh hear, attend, and yield so far as he pleased. He recalled his backsliding people to himself, from time to time, as soon as he undertook to teach them himself. He awakened, convinced, and humbled any individual among his people, at any time he saw best. When the body of his people had become as ignorant, as stupid, as unfeeling as the dry bones in the valley, he called them to life and sensibility, by his own sovereign and irresistible influence. In a few hours, he effectually and savingly taught the thief on the cross. He as instantly and savingly taught Saul of Tarsus while breathing out slaughter and death to the followers of Christ. He can irresistibly dart light and conviction into the consciences of the most bold and stout-hearted sinners, and throw them into the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. How often have scoffers attempted to resist divine teachings, and been confounded and conquered. God does not, indeed, always mean to teach sinners savingly; but he always teaches those effectually whom he means to teach effectually, and wounds those whom he means to destroy.

5. God teaches the most profitably. He gives more useful instructions to men, than they can give to one another. They can enlighten each other in respect to their temporal concerns, and in some measure in respect to their eternal interests. Job's friends said many good things to him; but he received very little light or conviction from their instructions. At length, God himself undertook to teach him, and his teaching carried light and conviction to his conscience and heart, and made the most useful impressions on his mind. This he freely acknowledged before God. "I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This leads me to observe in particular,

1. That God can give the most profitable instruction concerning himself. He can manifest himself to the minds of men, and give them such views of his greatness and glory, as they cannot give to one another. All that men can say about God, will leave them ignorant of his great and amiable character. But when he teaches them upon this subject, he brings himself near to them, and makes them realize his being, his presence, his all-seeing and heart-searching eye and his supreme power and right to save or destroy. He can make men feel that they are in his hand, as the clay is in the hand of the potter, that he can wound and heal, and none can deliver out of his hand. He can teach more about himself in one day, than one man can teach another in years. Let God only bereave a man of his friend, or take away his health, or disappoint his hopes, and he will teach him more about his holy and righteous sovereignty, than he ever did or could learn without divine teaching. God can place men in such circumstances, that they cannot help realizing his supremacy and their own dependance, and the weight of his great, and glorious, and awful character. Men must know God before they can either love, or serve, or enjoy him. To know God and Jesus Christ is life eternal, and none can come to the Son, but those who have been taught and learned of the Father. The knowledge which God teaches men concerning himself is essential to their salvation.

2. God can give the most profitable instruction respecting the human heart. This is a very useful branch of knowledge, which none but God can give. While God lets men alone, and does not take them into his own school, they always remain ignorant of their hearts. No discourses on total depravity, that man can utter, will teach men their native depravity. Paul had received much human instruction while in the state of nature; but he says he

continued ignorant of the enmity of his heart, until God taught him what he was. "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment which was ordained unto life, I found to be unto death." God opened his eyes to see himself and his holy law, by which he was bound and condemned; and this discovered the total corruption of his heart, and destroyed all his false and groundless hopes of the divine favour. But God takes different ways to make men know the plague of their own hearts. Very often he does this, by some special dispensation of providence. How many live at ease and unconscious of the total depravity of their hearts, until they are sorely afflicted and bereaved. This method God took to teach Manasseh, that prodigy of wickedness. He taught him by the briars and thorns, that saving knowledge, which none of the priests or prophets could teach him. He humbled him in the dust under a realizing sense of the aggravated guilt of his malignant heart.

3. God can teach men the most useful knowledge respecting the vanity of the world. Neither age, nor common experience, nor human instruction will make men sensible of the vanity of all earthly pursuits and enjoyments. But God can make them see and feel their vanity. He taught Solomon that knowledge of the world, which all the learning of Egypt could not teach him. He made him see and feel that the world and the things of the world were vanities of vanities, and a vexation of spirit. God can effectually teach men the vanity of the world, by only opening their eyes, and causing them to look into eternity. He has taught thousands and thousands, in this way, to renounce the world and the things of the world, and to choose himself for their supreme portion.

4. God can teach men the most useful knowledge respecting their own frailty and mortality. Neither observation, nor human instruction will make them realize how frail and mortal they are. Naturally their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations, and that they shall live forever, and not see corruption; but God can make them know their end, and the measure of their days, what it is, and how frail they are. David therefore prayed to God and said, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Though we see wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, we shall not realize that we are born to die, and are constantly walking on the side of the grave and verge of eternity, unless God effectually teaches us our frailty and mortality.

Finally, God can teach men the most profitable knowledge concerning the worth of the soul. The soul of every person is infinitely precious. It is capable of existing forever, and of enjoying eternal happiness, or suffering eternal misery. Nevertheless, all men naturally *despise* their own souls, and neglect their immortal interests for the sake of the trifles and vanities of this life. But God can make them realize the import of Christ's solemn question. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" When God undertakes to teach men himself effectually and savingly, he shows them the worth of their souls, and causes them to seek and secure the one thing needful. And this none can teach but God only.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. If God can teach men better than they can teach one another, then there is no ground to despair of the effectual instruction of any under the light of the gospel. It appears from long and universal observation and experience, that mankind are naturally unwilling to receive instruction respecting spiritual and divine subjects.—Under the Mosaic dispensation, God appointed priests and prophets to teach his people his character and their character, his commands and their duty. Under the gospel dispensation, Christ has appointed his ministers to teach men the doctrines and duties of his religion, and to beseech them, in his name to become reconciled to God. But priests and prophets, and apostles, and their successors, have always been very unsuccessful in their religious instructions. Some have misunderstood them, and many more have hated and rejected them, and chosen to live and die in fatal ignorance. Paul has planted, and Apollos has watered, but generally with little or no success. Men have always been able to resist all human instructions, and they are still able to resist them. But there is no ground to despair of the effectual instruction of any under the gospel. God can take the work into his own hands, and irresistibly and effectually teach the most stupid, careless, and obstinate. There is no ground to despair of the instruction of any nation, who enjoy the means of grace. God often instructed and reformed his own people, after they had fallen into a national declension and stupidity, notwithstanding all the efforts of their religious teachers to enlighten and restrain them.

The prophets, time after time, viewed them as incurable and in dispondence gave them up as past recovery by any mere human instructions and exertions. But God repeatedly brought about a national reformation. Though he does not instruct without means; yet he can use new means or employ old ones, to instruct whole nations what they had long neglected or refused to learn. He can employ means and make them effectual, to instruct, to reform, and to convert heathen as well as christian nations, and it appears from his promises, that he will fill the whole world with the knowledge of his glory, as soon as his power, in consistency with his goodness and wisdom, can bring about such a great and happy reformation and revolution among the nations of the earth. There is no city, nor town, nor village, nor family so ignorant or corrupt but he can effectually teach and reform them. He can instruct by afflictions and bereavements those who have neglected and refused to *read* his word, or to *hear* his gospel, or to *regard* private instructions and admonitions. He can cause the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the stupid to feel. He has access to the understandings consciences, and hearts of all sinners at all times and in all places, and can form one and another, and as many as he pleases vessels of mercy. In times of darkness and declension, the friends of God have no right to despond, as Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah did. God can effectually teach, when other teachers apparently labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought.

2. If God instructs in the manner we have heard, then we must conclude, that mankind are naturally very unwilling to be instructed. If they were willing to receive the instruction they might easily and early receive it from the common and ordinary means of instructions, which God is using with them. He is continually teaching them his being and perfections, by his works. "The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth his handy work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." And the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God head. So that all in the *christian*, and even in the *heathen* world are without excuse, if they remain ignorant of their Creator, Preserver and Benefactor, and do not glorify him as God. God is continually teaching them in the common course of providence, their frailty and mortality, by frequently calling them around the sick, the dying, and the dead. And he is teaching them by his word, the depravity of their hearts, the worth of their souls, and the importance of securing their salvation, by repentance of sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If they were willing to be instructed, these and other outward and ordinary means of instruction would be sufficient to lead them to the knowledge and practice of their duty, without

God's using other more powerful means of instruction. The truth is, mankind are born like the wild ass's colt, and choose to live in ignorance and stupidity. They say to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." They naturally hate parental instruction in their childhood and youth, and public instruction, in every succeeding period of life. The heathen world all live without the knowledge of the only living and true God, and much the largest portion of the christian world, live without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world, though they have line upon line, and precept upon precept. How very few learn their character, condition, and duty from the common and constant means of instruction.—God is obliged to employ other and more energetic means to awaken those whom he intends to awaken, to convince those whom he intends to convince, and to convert those whom he intends to convert. No one ever knows his utter aversion to religious instruction, until God undertakes to instruct him himself. This Ephraim acknowledged. God says, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, 'Thou hast chastized me, and I was chastized, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." The awakened and convinced sinner is astonished at his former stupidity and opposition to divine instruction.

3. If God instructs men in the manner that has been said; then they never can have any excuse for not harkening to his instructions. They often think they have reasons, and sometimes good reasons, for not harkening to human instructions. Children are apt to imagine, that they have good excuses for not regarding the instructions of their parents and others. They may think that parental instructions are unnecessary, unwise, and unimportant, and therefore unworthy their attention and regard; or they may think, that they are given at an improper time and in an improper manner; and for such reasons imagine, that they are excusable in refusing to yield an obedient ear. But they can have no such excuses for disregarding divine instructions; for God never gives them any unnecessary, or unwise, or unimportant, or unseasonable instructions. A people may think, that their public teachers give them unprofitable, unscriptural, or erroneous instructions; and feel themselves justified in disregarding them. But they never can find any excuse or palliation for disregarding the instructions which God gives them, by his word, or providence. He knows when to instruct them, how to instruct them, and what instructions to give them. He never teaches only when human instructions fail of producing their desired effect. He knows when men disregard or

misimprove human instruction, and need his own instruction, and in such cases, he takes them into his own hand, and gives them that kind of instruction, which their case requires. If they need to be instructed by losses, or by sickness, or by bereavements, he employs such means to instruct them, though he knows they will be grievous and hard to be borne. He never sends too few nor too many, too light or too heavy afflictions. The instructed, therefore, never have any reason to disregard the time, or manner, or duration of the painful instructions he gives them. As soon as they learn what they need to learn by the things which they suffer, he will remove their burdens, and give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

4. If God teaches in such a manner as we have heard; then those who disregard or abuse his instructions are extremely criminal. They reject the best instructions and manifest the most obstinate and unteachable spirit, which is highly displeasing to God. He requires them to be still and humble themselves under his mighty hand; but their hearts rise in direct enmity and opposition to him, while he is using the most proper and powerful means to teach them humiliation and self-abasement.—For such a spirit he severely reproves them. He upbraids them in this pointed language, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more." He said to Ezekiel whom he sent to instruct his people, "My people will not hear *you*, for they will not hear *me*." God tells them as one man, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." And again, he says, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would of none of my reproof, I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." There is another threatening still more expressive of God's displeasure towards every despiser and abuser of divine warnings, admonitions, and instructions. "He that being often *reproved*, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Hence,

5. Those who are under the bereaving, chastising, and instructive hand of God, are in a very critical, trying, and dangerous situation. God does not afflict them willingly nor undesignedly. He does not take them under his own immediate instruction for nothing. He intends to answer some wise and holy purpose by all the trails, afflictions, and bereavements, with which he visits them. He always means to make them better or worse, by all the dispensations of

his providence towards them, and he never fails of answering his original designs. He afflicted and bereaved Job for his good. He brought him to a cordial and unreserved submission to his bereaving and correcting hand, and eventually caused light to arise out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and good out of all the evils he suffered. He tried, afflicted, scourged, and taught Manasseh, by the briars and thorns, till he humbled himself greatly, returned to him cordially, and became his dutiful and obedient servant. But God designed in chastising Pharaoh time after time, to prepare him for his final overthrow; and he designed in chastising the froward Israelites year after year, for forty years together, not to prepare them to enter Canaan, but to fall and perish in the wilderness. In all these instances, God answered his different purposes of making some better and some worse, some the vessels of mercy and some the vessels of wrath. And he always means to answer the one, or the other of these purposes in chastising and instructing both saints and sinners. He tells them plainly, that so long as they are in affliction, they are in a state of trial, and that their trials will do them good or hurt, accordingly as they improve or misimprove them. If they are wise, they will neither despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when they are rebuked of him. They will feel and express that patience and submission, which the prophet did, when he said, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me." But they have great ground to fear, that they shall misimprove and abuse divine corrections and instructions, and come forth from the furnace of affliction, not like gold purified and refined; but like what men call reprobate silver, because the Lord has rejected them. Those who are externally afflicted have reason to tremble for fear, lest they shall refuse to learn obedience by the things they suffer, and to humble themselves under the right hand of God, which can save or destroy. Trials and afflictions are the most powerful means God ever employs to soften or harden the hearts of men. When they sensibly feel, that he is using these powerful means with them, they have reason to realize their critical and dangerous condition. They may now be hearing the loudest and most solemn calls to submission, repentance, reformation, and obedience, that they ever will hear before they meet the king of terrors and lie down in everlasting sorrow. The afflicted are to be pitied, not only only on account of their *suffering*, but more especially on account of their *dangerous* situation. They are in extreme danger of turning off their attention from God, and eternity, and the salvation of their souls, and fixing their eyes, and hearts, and hopes upon the foolish, hurtful, and ensnaring object of this world, which drown men in remediless perdition.

6. It appears from what has been said, that those whom God internally as well as externally teaches by the afflictive dispensations of providence, have great reason to be thankful, for his spiritual instructions. Sanctified afflictions are among the richest of divine favours. David gratefully acknowledged, that it had been good for him that he had been afflicted. The primitive christians often expressed their gratitude for the afflictions they were called to suffer. The apostle says to the Romans, "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience, & experience hope." He says to the Corinthians, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Such a source of hope and happiness in this life, are afflictions to those who wisely improve them; and this source of happiness never fails but continues through the endless ages of eternity. Saint John says in his vision of heaven, "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; Blessing, and glory and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all *tears*

from *their eyes.*" What a rich and lasting source of happiness are sanctified afflictions to those who wisely improve them to the glory of God and to their own good! Well might the primitive christians glory in tribulations, while they saw with the eye of faith, the future and everlasting good which should flow from them. Good men never enjoy a better opportunity to promote their temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests, than while God himself is teaching them in the furnace of affliction. You have heard of the faith of Abraham and of the patience of Job. Their extraordinary faith and patience were the happy fruits of their no less extraordinary trials and afflictions. Saints like the palm tree, are the most flourishing and fruitful under the lowest depressions. They are then the best capable and best disposed to receive the best instructions from the word and providence of God.

The whole tenor of this discourse now teaches all the afflicted, to pray for divine teaching "If any are afflicted, let them pray." This is a command of God which binds old and young, high and low, saints and sinners. If God has taken away a son or daughter from any, let them pray. If God has taken away a father or mother from any, let them pray. If God has taken away a brother or sister from any, Let them pray. Can any expect to receive any benefit from their afflictions, if they neglect to pray, that God would teach them to profit? Can any parents expect, that the death of a son or daughter will be sanctified to them, if they neglect, secret and family prayer? Can children expect, that the death of a father or mother, brother or sister will be sanctified to them, if they neglect to pray that they may be taught of God? How many afflicted and prayerless families are in this place? and how many more afflicted and prayerless persons dwell among this people? All such persons and families are hardening their hearts and preparing themselves for heavier afflictions, or remediless destruction. It is time for all the afflicted, all the stupid, all the impenitent, and all the unbelieving, to rise and call upon God to prepare them for death and eternity.

For the Christian Magazine.

EXEGESIS OF ROMANS, 8, 19.—*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

The sons of God, evidently mean christians—those, who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Through the spirit of adoption, they cry, Abba, Father. "The Spirit, itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." By the manifestation of the sons of God, is meant a lucid and full display of christian character and enjoyment. The lives of christians do make some manifestation of their relation to the great Jehovah; and they have some measure of the sweets of this blessed relation. At the same time, it must be confessed, that, as they are sanctified, but in part—and have much remaining sin, they make but a slight, a very imperfect manifestation of christian character and enjoyment. And their number has, hitherto, been comparatively small.

It is an event exceedingly desirable, that Zion should be enlarged, and that the character of the sons of God should be more distinctly marked. This is the event expected and waited for, according to the text. In anticipation of it, the apostle was comforted and animated. Though he suffered—and Zion suffered—and the world was lying in wickedness; yet, he looked forward and beheld a bright display of glory and blessedness. Hence he observed, "I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us." In this connection, he penned the passage under consideration. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." The principal difficulty is, to ascertain that, which is exegetical of "*The creature*, in this, and the three following verses. I have met with nothing, in any commentary, which satisfies my mind on the subject. With deference to those, who have critically attended to the subject and given their opinion, I would suggest an explanation; which appears to accord with the context and other scriptures. It is, that by *the creature*, is meant the new creature—one, who has been, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that is, *a true christian*. The following, are some of the reasons for this opinion.

1. The connection in which, *the creature* is introduced. The apostle had been speaking of christians. He had declared, that there is no condemnation to them—that, by their union to Christ, through the influence of the Spirit, they are made free from sin and death—that they are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit—that they are debtors, through the spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body—that they are the sons of God—that they have the spirit of adoption—that they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, &c. In this connection, without any intimation of a change in the character the creature is mentioned. And not only, without any intimation of a change in

the character, but with a clear intimation, that the same character is continued. The apostle declares, in the verse, immediately preceding the passage, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us." Then add, "For the earnest expectation of the creature, &c. The very connection would lead us to expect a continuation of the same character, which had been the principal subject of the chapter, and especially, of the verse immediately preceding.—This is the christian character; which more than intimates that, the creature and christians are synonymous.

2. The moral character of the creature, exactly corresponds with that of the christian. The creature is represented, as earnestly expecting, and waiting, with intense desire, for the manifestation of the sons of God. That is, to see christians act in character and shine as lights in the world—to see converts multiplied, as the drops of morning dew. And do not christians desire and expect, labour and pray for the same blessing? Do they not expect, that the sons of God will be more distinctly and glorious manifested, in this world, than they have ever been; and that, in the world to come, they will be perfectly manifested?

The description, given of the creature in the twenty-first verse, perfectly accords with the christian character. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly." Paul, with manifest application to christians, in general, said, "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would that do I not, but what I hate, that do I." The christian is subject to vanity, not willingly—that is, sin and its consequences are not agreeable to the spiritual, the renewed mind; but are the fruits of the flesh, or the remaining carnal disposition. Hence, subjects are applied to christians, and they are addressed, either as carnal; or, as spiritual; or, as partaking of both dispositions.—What is here said of the creature, as relates to moral character, does strictly apply to christians; but, it is believed will apply to no other being in the Universe.

The description of the creature in verse twenty-two is applicable to christians. "The whole creature, or every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Christians groan being burdened with their own sins. They agonize when they contemplate the sinful and wretched state of the world.—Pangs, on this account, like those of a travailing woman, run through the whole body of Christians. The twenty-third verse contains a striking confirmation of our opinion. "And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies." The beginning of this verse, manifestly, refers to those mentioned in the preceding, denominated *the whole creation*, or *every creature*. The only distinction between those, and these mentioned in the verse before us, is, that the latter have the *first fruits* of the Spirit. The first fruits are esteemed the best. Hence God, under the former dispensation, required, that the first fruits should be consecrated to him. The first fruits of the Spirit evidently mean a more gracious influence, or a larger measure of it, than was bestowed in ordinary cases. In this sense, Paul, and other apostles and teachers were favoured with the *first fruits* of the Spirit; while a smaller measure was granted to christians in general. It is certainly more than intimated in the comparison, which Paul makes between the *creatures* and *himself* and *others!* that while the latter had the *first fruits*—the former had the *fruits* of the Spirit. And this opinion is further confirmed, when we find the apostles and others, on whom the Spirit was profusely shed, bearing a sympathizing part with the *creatures* in bemoaning the sin, vanity and wretchedness, which prevailed. Thus, the moral feelings and character of the creature are, precisely, the feelings and character of the christian.

3. The hope, or expectation of the creature, is the same, as the christian hope. Every creature is groaning and travailing in pain, on account of sin; but, at the same time, he earnestly expects and waits for deliverance. This is the case with christians. In view of this subject, Paul exclaims, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the context it is stated, "We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that, we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." True believers have actually experienced a great change in their moral temper—and they have the earnest of everlasting holiness and joy; but, so scanty is their measure of holy love, and so frequent its interruptions, that they rather live on hope than actual fruition. And not only is the hope of the creature, with respect to himself, identified with that of the christian; but it is also the same, with respect to Zion at large and the world of mankind. There is the same earnest expectation and patient waiting for the accomplishment of all God's gracious promises.

4. No promise has been made, or can be made to the *christian*,

more encouraging and animating, than is made to the *creature.* "Because, the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." What can the creature desire? what can he have more? Will he be freed from the thraldom of sin--the bondage of corruption—will he have the perfect, the glorious liberty of God's children? then he will be an heir of God—an heir with Christ—he will be glorified with that Saviour in whose cause he has suffered. Richer blessings are, surely, no where promised to the people of God, than those, which are here promised to the *creature.* And they are, in fact, precisely *the same blessings.*

Is the *creature* introduced in connexion with christians, as being of the same fraternity--is the moral character, ascribed to the *creature*, the christian character--is he earnestly hoping for the same glorious things, for which christians hope, and has he the same exceeding great and precious promises, which christians have? Then, christians, and none but christians can be exegetical of the term *creature*, in this passage. OMICRON.

IRVING'S ORATIONS.

A plain Farmer was the other day met in a bar-room by a young Squire, who addressed him as follows:

"Well, neighbour, as you are a man of considerable reading, I presume you have read *Irving's Orations;* and I want you to tell me why we have no such writers on these shores of the Atlantic?—Have you ever met with such a master work in the new world?

Farmer. True, I have given the Orations a reading, but have hardly been able to form an opinion of them. Nor can I give a satisfactory reason, perhaps, why we have not such writers among us. I have such an awkward faculty of putting ideas into language, or else have no ideas, that I should be a poor hand to criticise on such works.

Esquire. But do you not *admire* them? Has he not swept away all the technical language of theology, which so effectually hampers the pulpit orator, and placed the subject of theology before us in a most interesting dress; so that, however much complaint there has been about the opposition of sinners to preaching, no heart can now fail to admire and love what he proposes?

F. I acknowledge that he is somewhat a singular genius; such as I should think would raise admiration in most audiences. But you must not expect that we farmers can be easily touched with what you might denominate the flowers of rhetoric. I once took some pleasure in passing through a flower garden; but as I advance in years, I find, that in my pursuit for real fruit, or valuable vegetables, I tread flowers under my feet with indifference. Mr. Irving has swept away some technical terms from his theology, but has introduced others from law, physic, astronomy, botany, and the whole field of science, to me hardly intelligible, though I always thought I had a pretty good idea of *theological* language as used in the scriptures and the writings of our best divines. But this champion affects to despise it all, and suggests to us that the reason why christianity has been received by so few, is that it has unfortunately been preserved in a dress too stiff and systematical, to please the better feelings of mankind. He declaims unsparingly against the whole company of divines, reformers, and pulpit orators which the world has produced; and gives us a hint that we may expect from his pen an entire reform. Now I have read his Orations, and his argument for the Judgment; and you ask me, if I do not admire them. I cannot tell. I seemed to admire something every page I read; but what it was I could scarcely conceive. Nor could I say which it was, admiration, astonishment, or contempt, or a compound, that I felt. I concluded finally that the "vox, et preterea nihil," was so wonderfully arranged, that my feelings had for their exciting cause, as our Doctor says, the skill of the musician. No doubt, Mr. Irving has a zeal which is laudable; and he cannot be accused of inactivity in the pursuit of his object. But, whatever may be his age, he must be a young man. He has the judgment of an ambitious youth, or I am much deceived; and will substantially fail of his end, or I am no prophet.

E. A prophet I will never acknowledge you, nor a man of *taste* if you mean to insinuate that Irving is wanting in taste. Dear Sir, I think you must be mistaken in your views of the man. How did you acquire so strong prejudices against such a beautiful writer? Was it from his *theology*, his peculiar sentiments, or where is the cause of such an unfriendly judgment?

F. I acknowledge that my taste does not agree with Mr. Irving's and yours; but I am not conscious of any prejudices which were not excited by a patient reading of the work. As to his theology, I have less objection to the kind than the degree of it.—I do not find much theology in the volume. After reading his Orations for the Oracles of God, I acknowledge that my feelings of their importance were increased. And the truth of a righteous judgment, I should have questioned, had my faith waited for the support which Mr. Irving proposed to afford. I do not say that he is not a good advocate, but I cannot follow his argument.

E. I perceive then that he is too deep for you. I was aware that you did not comprehend him. I think his arguments for the Judgment are excellence and conclusive.

F. In what does the excellence of an argument consist?

E. Why, sir, I think it consists in such inverted sentences as to confound an adversary; such thrilling language as to fill his blood with the cold chills of fear; and such impetuosity as to be irresistible. I admire to see an orator in a moment at his conclusion, and by such a masterly manœuvering that no one can see how it is done; and then he is sure that an opponent cannot refute him.

F. I now perceive why Mr. Irving pleases you; it is because he chants you into an obsequious fondness for the man, and makes you forgetful of his subject, until he brings you to the conclusion; and then out of mere courtesy you are unwilling to wrest yourself from it.

E. Do you then think there is a deficiency in his manner of reasoning?

F. Indeed I do.

E. Then you are ready, I conclude, to point out this deficiency and let us have your idea of an excellent argument. Now I expect to learn something; proceed—

F. You must bear with a farmer, if I make use of some common objects to illustrate my ideas. There is so much bowing and scraping to his auditors when he is about to introduce an idea, that I can think of nothing else for some time. After he has introduced himself and prepared the object of his message, he seems for some time to forget his errand or object, and spends a great deal of time in entertaining them with his own skill in rhetorical flashes and thunderings. In other words, when he commences an argument his illustrations are so diverting to the mind, that, instead of serving as intermediate links, chaining the premises with the conclusion, they only serve to confuse the argument, and render the connexion between the premises and conclusion, a matter of uncertainty. You know too, that he has an *air*; an air so peculiar that we cannot keep it out of sight. I once heard it remarked, that "Whatever speaker gained the attention of his audience to *himself*, had some defect in manner." Irving has this defect, though I may never point it out. I think he would be a better reasoner and a better orator did he pay more respect to those things he affects to dread and despise: for instance, if he intends an argument in favor of the Judgment; let him first gain a strong conception of its essential parts in his own mind; then clothe his ideas in language *appro-*

priate; even theological or technical, rather than sacrifice perspicuity and conclusiveness, to a fondness to please poetic ears.

Esq. But one would think from your remarks that he entirely fails of his object.

F. No. He does not fail of *his object;* for he never seems to have the *right* object for any length of time. He is too enthusiastic to please. With him, all is lost if he does not succeed in pleasing. He conveys the idea that christianity will please, when rightly addressed to the world. He is sanguine in this visionary sentiment. For this reason, his object almost always is to please. And he does not often fail perhaps of his object.

Esq. Very well, can a speaker expect to recommend religion by offending his auditors?

F. By no means. To offend is no better than to please. Neither is the proper object of the preacher; his object is to follow the directions of his Master. "Go teach all nations to observe whatsoever I have commanded you." Did any Apostle obey his Master in this commission, without carrying with him "the offence of the cross;" as offensive as "systematic forms of speech" are to Mr. Irving? Finally, was not our Lord a perfect example of his own blessed ministry? And did he ever please his hearers, except they had already become his disciples? The truth is, true religion never was pleasing to the unrenewed heart of man. You may dress it as you will, and when you present it for the reception of a sinner, if he discovers its reality or true features, he will reject it. If you present it clothed in such human vestments, that he does not perceive what is presented, he may receive it; but on the first discovery that it makes the demands of religion, he will reject it.

Esq. But, Sir, you do not suppose that all means of commending the gospel are equally eligible. Will not such addresses as some of Mr. Irving's effectually enter the understanding, awaken the conscience and subdue the heart?

F. They may reach the understanding and gain it, arouse the conscience and give it vigour, and may reach the heart, but will never subdue it. The heart is addressed by them; but it holds out in an obstinacy of pursuit, which means alone never overcome. Mr. Irving seems at times sensible of the inadequacy of means; but at others, he speaks as if the only reason why they are not always irresistible, is, that they are poor, indiscreet or ill adapted.

Esq. Well, I confess that I felt something of this discrepancy in his work; but you know there are some of the most elegant writers of the day who have advanced a similar idea. The illustrious Erskine has offered this as his opinion; at least, he conveys the idea.

F. True, he does, and nearly ruined his otherwise beautiful treatise on the evidences of christianity.

Esq. How do you account for this?

F. Perhaps the latter writer mentioned may ascribe his error to the want of investigation of that particular topic. Some men become so great, certain points are deemed too easy of decision to require investigation. They deem themselves capable of deciding almost intuitively; and will by no means descend to the drudgery of studying points of theology.

Besides, he has stepped from his profession, and has meddled with matters not appropriately belonging to him.

Esq. Then none but your Bishops have any right to speak or write upon theology!

F. That is more than I mean to say. But I seldom knew a man of one profession, that had a deep and universal acquaintance with the peculiarities of other professions. It is not irrational to suppose that divines should understand divinity as well as statesmen, lawyers, doctors, or farmers.

Esq. Perhaps then Mr. Irving understands theology, and the manner of treating it, as well as you, the farmer, do.

F. Yes; I have taken great liberty, I confess. But my object was to excite a few queries in your mind respecting it. I knew you to be young and ardent; and the taste of the day seems to encourage such writings as those which we have been considering. Now for one, I do not believe that wisdom was born with Mr. Irving.—or will die with him. In spite of his declamation, I have yet left a great deal of respect for the clear, pure and appropriate English Language which divines have used in days that I never saw. And I would not exchange it for the careless and far borrowed Scotticisms of the Orator. C. F.

Con. Ob.

INFIDELITY BROUGHT TO THE TEST OF EXPERIMENT.

Mr. Godwin in writing the life of Mary Woolstencraft, meant without doubt, to recommend infidelity to mankind, but happily for them, he has in these memoirs exhibited what may be termed a series of experiments, from which they may learn its tendency, both as to morals and happiness. In the beginning of the work he informs us that Mrs. Woolstencraft "had received few lessons of religion in her youth, and that her religion was almost entirely of her own creating"—that "she expected a future state, but would not allow her ideas of that future state to be modified by the notions of judgment and retribution.

Now let us hear the progress of this self-created religion. It led her, first, to remissness in attending public worship; and, at length, to discontinue it entirely. Mr. Godwin indeed thinks "it may be admitted as a maxim, that no person, of a well furnished mind, that has shaken off the implicit subjection of youth, and is not the zealous partizan of a sect, can bring himself to conform to the public and regular routine of sermons and prayers.

Her religion was as chaste as it was devout. It allowed her to live as a wife with Mr. Inclay, without being married to him, and afterwards on the same terms with Mr. Godwin, to whom she was at length married, only to prevent her complete exclusion from decent society.

Her attachment to Inclay seems to have been violent. His neglect of her gave her most poignant distress. The religion of *her own creating* totally unlike that which God teaches, affording no resource for her wretched mind, she twice in the course of five months, resolved on suicide. One attempt to destroy herself is thus related by Godwin; "she took a boat, and rowed to Putney. It was night when she arrived at Putney, and by that time it had begun to rain with great violence. The rain suggested to her the idea of walking up and down the bridge till her clothes were thoroughly drenched and heavy with the wet which she did for half an hour without meeting a human being. She then leaped from the top of the bridge, but still seemed to find a difficulty in sinking which she endeavoured to counteract by pressing her clothes closely around her." She, however, was discovered, and taken out of the water. "After having been for a considerable time insensible," continues her biographer, "She was recovered by the exertion of those by whom the body was found."

But let us hasten to the conclusion. She died in childbed. In the detail of this awful scene, we have the following affecting passage: "Her religion as I have already shown, was not calculated to be the torment of a sick bed; and in fact, during her whole illness, not one word of a religious cast fell from her lips." In other words she died like an atheist. The paradoxical cast of her mind was visible in other things as well as in the affairs of religion. She ridiculed the fashion of the English women in keeping their chamber for a month, and for herself proposed "coming down to dinner on the day immediately following her being brought to bed;" but she was too ill to execute her design. The hour was at hand, the awful hour that was to put a period to all her visionary ideas, and all her opportunities of preparing for another world; yet she would still utter her philosophical reveries. Describing what she had suffered, she told Godwin, "that she should have died the preceding night but that "*she was determined* not to leave him." Such is the good sense, such the piety and comforts of the new philosophy. These are the enlighteners of mankind. These are the people who undertake to cure us of our prejudice?

Chris. Ob. VIATOR.

PART II.

THOUGHTS ON THE SABBATH DURING THE JEWISH DISPENSATION.

The sanctification of the seventh day, which was appointed in the time of man's primeval innocence must have continued to be an institution of constant obligation through the succeeding ages, which intervened between the fall of man and the publication of the moral law at Mount Sinai. Since we find no repeal of the original command in the books of Moses. When a summary of the moral law was promulgated to the Israelites, at the Holy Mount and inscribed by the finger of God on tables of stone, we find this original command of a Sabbath, bearing a conspicuous part in the sacred code. The fourth commandment explains and enforces this first institution of God to man. *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;* or, as it is expressed by Moses when recapitulating the commands in the book of Deuteronomy. *Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it.* Deut. 5, 12.

Let us then enquire, what are the duties of the day and what the limitations of those duties, as they are to be found in Scripture during the Jewish dispensation.

The fourth commandment shews that we are to abstain from our ordinary worldly calling and employments, which it is our duty to pursue on the other six days with diligence. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work. Exodus, 20.9, 10.

We are commanded also to use our endeavours that this day be sanctified by all over whom we have authority or influence.—"Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

We are not, therefore, to permit the works of our ordinary worldly occupations to be carried on by others on our behalf; but we ought to put the same restraint upon those who are under our control which our duty requires us to put upon ourselves.

The Supreme Legislator has given us, by the prophet Isaiah, a still more ample account of the duties implied in the sanctification of the Sabbath. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, &c. This passage of scripture deserves to be studied with peculiar attention, as it not only describes the duties of the day, but also the temper of mind with which they are to be performed. The Prophet arranges the command under three heads. The first is, that we are not to do our own ways, which relates chiefly, I apprehend, to our worldly business, as is largely set forth in the fourth commandment. The second, that we are not to find our own pleasure on the Sabbath. It is not to be a day of merriment, of sports, of pastimes, or of mere amusement. All those ways of spending the Sabbath, which are contrived for the purpose of sensual pleasure are to be avoided, though the temperate refreshment of the body is not forbidden. It is to be a day of rest from bodily labour; but not a season of mere animal recreation. It is unnecessary and indeed impossible, to enumerate the various species of pleasure which are forbidden on this day; but as every one knows what is meant by a day of sensual pleasure, so every one may know what is forbidden under this head.

Thirdly, we are forbidden to speak our own words. The conversation ought to be suited to the sacred offices of the day. For as we are prohibited from pursuing our ordinary labours on the Sabbath, so are we also prohibited from making them the subject of our discourse, we cease from our own words, when we confine our conversation to subjects of a religious or moral nature, when we employ our time in instructing our dependents, our children and servants, or in edifying conversation with our equals. Though these three injunctions are expressed in the negative form; yet (according to a well known rule of interpreting scripture, a rule derived from the scriptures themselves) we must understand them as enjoining the opposite conduct. This beautiful passage of the Prophet teaches us also what aught to be the temper of our minds in these holy exercises.—Far from being weary of the spiritual employment on the Sabbath, we ought to account them our pleasures, and call *the Sabbath a delight*, as well as *holy of the Lord.* This day we are to esteem *honourable* above all others. We are thus peculiarly to *honour Him*, whose bounty created us, whose long suffering has preserved us, and whose unsearchable goodness has provided a way for our eternal redemption. Thus in the nature of the duty of sanctifying the sabbath pointed out with the utmost clearness. A limitation, however, is sometimes put, by the infirmities of our fallen nature, to some of the exercises which ought, when we are unrestrained to occupy us on this sacred day. Sickness may confine us to our beds, when we should otherwise be engaged in public worship; and, in such occasional interruptions, we may require the attention and assistance of others.

The Lord, by declaring that he prefers mercy to sacrifice, has pointed out our duty on these occasions. Whatever the necessities of our nature, as the relief of hunger, or aid in sickness, may require, must be considered as consistent with the sanctification of the Sabbath. Our Savior, by his precepts, and example, has completely illustrated this part of the subject.

Here it is proper to observe, that God sent forth his Son *made under the law*. Christ lived and died under the Jewish dispensation. By his expositions of the moral law he pointed out its real nature and extent, but made no alterations in it. When he declared that acts of necessity and charity were suitable to the Sabbath he introduced no new doctrine but appealed to the Jews themselves respecting the truth of what he taught. "Jesus spake unto the lawyers and pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And they held their peace. Luke, 14. 3.

The question, undoubtedly was of this import: Is it agreeable to the law of God as delivered by Moses? Is it consistent with the fourth commandment and with the illustration of that commandment by the holy prophets? The silence of the Jewish rulers was a tacit acknowledgement, that such acts of mercy were consistent with the due observance of the sabbath. If the ordinary employment of any person consists in these acts which the proper duties of the Sabbath require, or which are allowed on that day they certainly cannot be considered as infringments of the fourth commandment. The blessed Jesus appealed to the law of Moses on this head.—"Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath day, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless?"—Matt. 12. 5. Our Savior also taught that it is consonant to the law of God to take a due care even of the brute creation on the Sabbath, much more of our fellow creatures; and on this ground he reproved the indignant ruler of the synagogue, who wished to represent our Savior's healing of the diseased as a work forbidden on the Sabbath day. "Thou hypocrite, doth each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him to watering?" And again, to the lawyers and pharisees, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" And they could not answer him again to these things. Luke 13, 15. 14, 3. These passages scripture clearly prove, that our Lord was not introducing any relaxation of the Sabbath, suited to the genius of the Gospel dispensation; but that he was speaking the language of the law as delivered to the Jews, and shewing, that acts of necessity, of mercy, and compassion, were duties suited to the strictest observance of the Sabbath. If this had not been the case our Savior could not have charged the ruler with hypocrisy, nor would his appeal to the law of Moses have silenced them who wished to accuse him of breaking that law. It has been thought by some, that our Savior exceeded the bounds of the Jewish law, when he directed the man whom he had healed at the pool of Bethesda, "to take up his bed and walk." John, 5. 8. because God had commanded the people, by the prophet Jeremiah "to bear no burden on the Sabbath day." Ch. 17. 21. Those who entertain such a thought, should consider that our Lord perfectly understood the law, and if this was a breach of it, he was directing the poor man to commit a heinous offence against the state; for this as well as several others of the ten commandments, was incorporated into the civil laws of the Jews "Ye shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death." Exod. 31.14, But an attentive consideration of the passages, prohibiting the bearing of burdens on the Sabbath, will shew that they relate to such burdens as were borne in the carrying on of trade or ordinary labors. "If ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of the city, on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein." Jer. 17. 24.—So likewise in the book of Nehemiah. "In those days I saw in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine grapes and figs and all manner of burdens which they brought into Jerusralem on the sabbath day. Neh. 13. 15." The cripple, when our Savior had healed at the pool of Bethesda, was friendless as well as poor; and probably had nothing but his portable bed or mattrass, whereon to rest his weary limbs: the Lord Jesus, therefore directed him to take care of this necessary piece of furniture, when he had strengthened the body of this indigent creature and enabled him to return to his own house.

Another passage of the Old Testament may be thought to express a degree of strictness in the observance of the Sabbath which was peculiar to the Jewish dispensation. "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitation on the Sabbath day. Exod. 35. 3.—But this, compared with its context, seems to relate only to fires made for the purposes of labour. The whole passage runs thus; "Six days shalt work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire &c."

We may rest assured that he who prefers mercy to sacrifice, would not forbid the use of fire for the purpose of warmth in any country where the inhabitants might be compelled to say, "Who is able to abide his frosts?" Nor is it probable, that he who vindicated the conduct of his disciples when they had plucked the ears of corn as they walked through the fields, for the purpose of satisfying their hunger would forbid the use of fire for the necessary preparations of their food.

We may conclude, therefore, that the kindling of a fire, for the refreshment of the body, was not contrary to the Jewish law.

On the whole, I see nothing in the duties of the Sabbath, as subsisting under the Jewish dispensation, but a most spiritual and rational service. suitable, indeed, to the period of man's innocence, yet accommodated to the necessities which sin has introduced into the world. The sanctions of the Sabbath were undoubtedly increased, as the breach of it was, by that law, made a capital offence. But this was not peculiar to the fourth commandment, and was a circumstance belonging to the policy rather than to the religion of the Jews.

I cannot conceive a more delightful exercise to a heavenly minded person, than that of spending the day in the manner described by the prophet Isaiah. If the Jews, instead of confining their attention to these spiritual services prepared a number of unnecessary restraints, we must not form our Judgment of the real duties of the Sabbath from their conduct. We know that the farther they deviated from the pure word of God in other instances, the more careful they were to make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments; nor were they ever more strict in tything mint, annise, and cummin, than when they neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and the law of God. W. H.

Ch. Obs.

POSITIVE DIVINE EFFICIENCY.

To the Editors of the Christian Magazine.

Gentlemen,

A correspondent in your April number has answered some objections to the doctrine, that God exerts *a positive agency* in the hearts of sinners, or an agency of *the same kind and degree that is exerted in the hearts of christians.*

I say this is the doctrine he defends, because he calls it "*positive* agency" and reasons throughout his 2d and 3d heads on the supposition that it is in kind and degree the *same* agency which is exercised over saints; and because if he does not mean this, he is contending with a shadow for none who "acknowledge that the saint acts under a positive Divine Agency" deny that in some sense the Divine agency is concerned with every event in the Universe.

Neither of your correspondent's objections, except the first, did I ever hear made by any who believe in a positive agency in the case of saints; yet I am ready to admit, that he has fully answered them, and if he, or some other one, will as fully answer those of which I *have* heard, I shall be gratified.

Hoping that this may be done, or at least that some of your able correspondents will throw some light on a subject which is often needlessly darkened by the manner in which it is treated, & which is connected with the first principles of our religion, I shall state freely the difficulties to which I allude.

I. The doctrine is contrary to the experience of christians.

Christians feel, and frequently say, that if left to themselves, in their unrenewed state, they should have gone on in sin; and if left to themselves (i.e. without any different kind or degree of Divine influence than they had before conversion, they should, after regeneration, fall away and perish. The general Divine agency which upholds the moral faculties of the christian, is not enough; he needs a superadded positive or special agency to preserve him:—such an agency that he feels bound to ascribe his preservation to God and not to himself, though his actions were perfectly free.

Now what man ever felt the need of such an agency to preserve him in a course of transgression, or indeed of any other Divine influence than that which preserves him a moral agent in the midst of temptation? The objection implies that the agency of God in the case of sinners as found by experience to be different, to be less direct & positive than that which is exercised in saints.

II. It is inconsistent with the representations of Scripture.—These representations accord exactly with the experience of true christians, from the manifest reason that they are delineations of those emotions which true christians feel.

They represent that we are naturally prone to evil exclusively and continually, that we are led captive by Satan at his will; that we are drawn away by our own lusts, and not tempted of God, when we commit iniquity; that when God *takes away the restraints* which his influence imposes upon sinners, *withdraws* his spirit from them and leaves them to their own ways, they rush on to hopeless ruin.

On the other hand, they represent saints as kept by the power of God; God hath made them to differ from others; as to their good deeds, it is not they who do them, but Christ who dwelleth in them; the Lord inclines their hearts to his statutes and keeps their feet in his way.

The agency of God is exerted and is *efficient* in both cases, (i. e. accomplishes all which God designs) but in one case it is privative or indirect and general, in the other, it is positive, direct and special. In one case, it merely preserves the ordinary laws of mind and does not prevent their natural effect, in the other, it counteracts the influence of these laws or creates new ones. Just as the agency of God is as *real* and *efficient* in causing a stone to fall to the ground when unsupported, as in causing it to fly off unpropelled, whilst there is yet a manifest difference in the agency exerted in the two cases.

The Scriptures also represent the human mind as the scene of a controversy between God and the adversary of souls. God invites, urges, threatens sinners in order to lead them to holiness. Satan allures, flatters, deceives, in order to keep them in sin. Now if the agency of God is equally direct and positive on both sides of this controversy, there would seem to be an incongruity in the representation.

Again; the scriptures speak of the actions of good men as if the credit of these actions were to be ascribed to the Divine agency which prompted them, in some respects as the credit of the reformation of a voluptuous youth is ascribed to the kind friend whose persuasion induced him to reform, or the guilt of his vicious course to the man whose counsels and influence led him astray. Now if the agency of God is the same in the hearts of sinners, as of saints why does it not follow that the actions of the wicked are to be ascribed to God in the same sense as the holy actions of the righteous.

III. The doctrine is not in the Bible.

If this objection can be fairly set aside I freely acknowledge that the doctrine must be received, whatever difficulties may attend it. The text to which your correspondent alludes Ex. 9. 12. "The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh and several others which he might have named, prove, (what indeed nobody doubts) the existence of some divine agency in the actions of wicked men; but do they prove that this agency is positive or direct; and that it is the same as in the actions of holy men? If they do not, they leave the objection unaffected; if they *do* prove this, the objection will be answered by showing *how* they prove it. With a few remarks upon your correspondents principles of interpretation I shall close.

He says he "knows of no principles of logic or interpretation which allow of such license" as ascribing to *God* what *man* does I profess no skill in the "rules of logic or interpretation" with which your correspondent seems familiar, but I have been accustomed to regard the principles which he thinks so inadmissible, viz. that it is proper to ascribe to *God in one sense*, what is done by *man in another sense* as of fundamental and indispensable importance in the explanation of the scriptures.—Nor do I see how your correspondent can without it dispose of the very text he adduced, viz. "The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh," for the same chapter repeatedly assures us that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. I know of no way to avoid this difficulty, but by adopting the principle in question and saying "God hardened Pharaoh's heart by employing another" (i. e. Pharaoh himself) "to do it."

Again; it is said II. Saml. 24. 1. "The Lord moved David to number Israel and I. Chron. 21. 1. that Satan moved him to the same thing; yet II. Saml. 24. 10, 17 and I. Chron. 21. 8, 17 the transaction is spoken of as if David's agony was alone concerned in numbering the people. Will your correspondent inform me by what "principles of interpretation" he reconciles these without admitting that the Lord moved David, by employing satan to move him?

Indeed the whole number of texts in which the actions of men are ascribed to God, seem incapable of explanation without admitting that God is said to do, what in his providence he employs others to do.* The truth is we cannot tell from the terms employed, whether the Divine agency in particular cases, is the same or different, direct or indirect, for the manifest reason that agencies are spoken of in the same terms which are in other parts of the scriptures determined to be different. The objections mentioned go to show that this is the case in the agency exercised in the hearts of sinners and of saints and it may be well for your correspondent to answer the *real* objections of those who differ from him before he very confidently concludes their opinion to be false. If the reasonings on the rules of interpretation, to which he objects, are invalid, it will tend much to the conviction of those who adopt them to have this invalidity pointed out.

XANTHUS.

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*See an admirable illustration of this principle in a Sermon of the Rev. Dr. Emmons relative to Pharaoh.

Friendship.—A false friend is like the shadow of a dial, it appears in clear weather, but vanishes on the approach of a cloud.

Scandal.—The way in which some *good sort* of people are betrayed into scandal is not by forging a false story, but by telling what they do not know to be true. There is not so much lying in the world as want of solicitude about truth. Another tosses the firebrand to us and we toss it along. Let such people remember a sentence from Barrow. "There is no great difference between the great Devil that framed scandalous reports and the little imps that run about and disperse them. The reader must recollect the etymology of the Greek word, devil.

Ch. Spec.

INTELLIGENCE.

The Pope has lately founded a philological college at Rome, on the same footing as the ancient Sorbonne in France, which will be charged with the examination of all literary works before they are printed. His Holiness has also considerably augmented the number of theological colleges.

Some years since, the Syrian Archbishop, Giarve, visited Rome, Paris, and London, to obtain money, as he then professed, in order to print the Scriptures on Mount Lebanon. Money and a press were accordingly given him; but he has never printed the Scriptures, and being now elected Syrian Patriarch, he opposes their circulation by the missionaries.

The Rev. Lewis Way purchased a Church at Paris, at an expense, to himself, of about $45,000, and officiated in it as long as as his health would permit. There are commonly about 20.000 English People at Paris.—An American Church is also established there. There are 2 or 3 millions of Protestants in France.

The whole number of missionaries now actually employed by the British Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign parts, in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward's Island, Cape Breton, New-Brunswick, and Newfoundland, together with the Canadas and Burmudas, is one hundred and three; besides whom, more than a hundred schoolmasters are partially supported from its funds.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

The Publishing Committee of the Christian Magazine will continue the work. They cherish the hope, that in consequence of some new arrangement which they have determined to adopt, the third volume will be more entertaining and more deserving of approbation than either of the preceding. While they feel grateful for the public patronage they have received, they respectfully solicit its continuance. If any of the present subscribers intend to discontinue the work at the close of the current year, they are desired to give notice of their intention to the printer or some agent before the issuing of the next number. And all who give no such notice will be considered as desiring the work the succeeding year.

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SERMON.

MATTHEW 22, 14.—*For many are called, but few are chosen.*

Ever since the first apostacy, the minds of men have been darkened, through the ignorance that is in them by reason of the blindness of their hearts. They can see no beauty in the divine character, and no consistency, nor even sincerity in the divine conduct. The truth of this observation will probably be felt by many, while I am reading the parable, which closes with the words I have read. "And Jesus answered, and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king who made a marriage for his son; and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: *and they would not come.* Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, behold I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways; one to his farm, another to his merchandize: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the high-ways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on the wedding garment: and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was *speechless.* Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. *For many are called, but few are chosen.*" Now says one and another I have often heard and read this text, and it always appears to me in the same light. Do you not see the inconsistency of God in his secret and revealed will, and his insincerity in his universal call and particular election? Many are called, but few are chosen. All are invited to accept of salvation, while only a few are elected to eternal life. If God means to save all, he may with propriety invite all to come to the gospel feast; but as he means to save only a chosen few, and to destroy the rest, it is very hard to conceive how his offers are sincere and consistent with his designs. As there are many, no doubt, who entertain such views of God, and feel such difficulties in their minds, respecting his character and conduct, it seems necessary to explain the meaning and consistency of his language in the text, "Many are called, but few are chosen." This plain declaration suggests this plain truth to our present consideration,

That God *invites* more, than he *elects*, to accept of salvation. To set this subject in a clear light, it is proposed,

I. To show that God does invite *all* to accept of salvation, And,

II. To illustrate his sincerity in *inviting more*, than he has elected, to accept of salvation.

I. I am to show that God *invites all* to accept of salvation. Election always conveys the idea of distinction. If God had determined to save all mankind, such a determination would have been inconsistent with any personal distinction or election. But if he has determined to save a part, and not the whole of the human race; then this determination necessarily supposes what is properly called personal election, or choosing one and not another, or choosing a part and not the whole of mankind to eternal life. And in this distinguishing sense, the doctrine of election is represented in scripture, God chose David, in distinction from all his brethren, to be king over Israel. God chose the Jews in distinction from all other nations to be his peculiar people. And God chose Paul in distinction to Judas to eternal life. All saints are called a *chosen* generation, a peculiar people. The apostle speaking of the few Jews that embraced the gospel in his day, says, "So then, at this time also, there is a remnant, *according to the election of grace.*" Christ speaks of all those as believers, whom his father had given him, and whom he had *chosen* out of the world. And this agrees with his declaration in the text. "Many are called, but few are chosen." Whether by this declaration he meant to intimate, that but few of mankind would be eventually saved, in comparison to those who will be eventually lost, it is not to our present purpose to inquire. Though we may just observe, that it is probable Christ had particular respect to the success of the gospel, at the time in which he lived. But be this as it may, there is no doctrine more plainly revealed in the gospel, than the doctrine of personal election to eternal life. And according to scripture history, but very few have been chosen in proportion to those who have been called, from the fall of man to this day. God has commonly invited more, than he has elected, to accept of salvation. This will more fully appear, if we consider,

1. The tenor of his gracious invitations. These are all couched in the most extensive and universal terms. "Unto you, O men I call, says divine wisdom, and my voice is to the sons of man." Another divine invitation runs in this unlimited form. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." "Come unto me, says Christ, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Come, says the master of the gospel feast, for all things are now ready." "Behold, says the compassionate Saviour, "I stand at the door and knock, *if any man* hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me." "The Spirit and bride say come, let him that is athirst say come, and *whosoever will* let him come and take of the water of life freely." In such universal terms God graciously invites sinners to accept of salvation. His invitations extend to all men, of all ages, of all characters, and of all conditions in life. He invites rich and poor, high and low, bond and free, *elect* and *non-elect* to accept of the great salvation which he has provided for them. He excludes none, omits none in his general invitations. Many are called, and many more called, than are chosen. And this further appears,

2. From the final refusal of those, who were invited to accept of salvation. The parable with which the text is connected, represents those who were first invited to the gospel feast as utterly refusing to come. The sacred writers represent the great majority of mankind from Adam to Christ, as rejecting the overtures of divine mercy. And we know, that the Jewish nation generally rejected the gospel which Christ preached, and which his apostles preached after he left the world. Wherever they preached the gospel, as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, but much the greater part rejected the counsel

of God against themselves. This has been the case ever since, wherever the offers of salvation have been made. Now all who have heard and finally rejected the offers of salvation, and all who shall hereafter hear and reject the invitation of mercy must perish. For this is the unalterable condition of the gospel: "He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." All who have finally refused to accept the offers of life, are so many instances of God's calling those whom he had not elected to salvation. Indeed, here is no text in the Bible more visibly verified every day and every where, than this we are considering—"Many are called but few are chosen." We know he calls many, who visibly live and die in impenitence and unbelief; which is a visible evidence that he calls many more, than he has ordained to eternal life. This leads to the

II. Thing proposed, to speak on God's behalf, and endeavor to vindicate this part of the divine conduct.

That God does invite many more to accept of salvation, than he has ordained to eternal life, has been, perhaps sufficiently established. But if this be undeniably true, it must be equally true, that God is consistent and sincere in his gracious and universal invitations to sinners, though we may not be able to discover and explain the consistency and sincerity of his conduct. It is hardly supposable, however, that we should be unable to see the propriety of his most common and mostgracious treatment of mankind in respect to their future and eternal happiness. Let us, therefore seriously and impartially consider this matter on our part. No body sees any difficulty in God's calling those,whom he knows beforehand will not hear and accept his call; but many see a difficulty in his inviting those to accept of salvation, whom he never intended to save but always intended to destroy. The text says that many are called but few are chosen. Here the difficulty is, to see how God can consistently, with sincerity, say one thing and mean another. He says by his universal invitation, that he is willing and even desirous of saving all; while, at the same time, he has not chosen to save all, but actually chosen not to save all. This is the formidable difficulty which we shall now attempt to remove. And if it can be made to appear, that God is really sincere in his universal offers of salvation and means what he says; then the difficulty will entirely vanish, and no seeming ground of objection will remain against this part of the divine conduct. And here if we can determine what sincerity is, it will be easy to determine whether the universal invitations of the gospel are sincere and consistent with the divine rectitude.

We all know what is implied in one man's making a sincere offer to another; and we must suppose, that precisely the same things are implied in God's making sincere offer to sinners. This leads me to observe,

1. That God always has the good to bestow, which he offers to sinners in the gospel. No man can be sincere in offering that to another, which he does not possess and has no right to bestow.—Satan was not sincere in offering all the kingdoms of the world to Christ, because they were not his property and he had no right to offer what he did not possess. And if God had not the good to bestow which he offers to sinners in the gospel, there could be no sincerity in his offers. But he has the good he offers, when he invites them to accept it. "My oxen and my fatlings are killed; come, for all things are now ready." God has given his Son to taste death for every man, and to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He has made ample provision for the salvation of all, and therefore he may consistently and sincerely invite all to accept it, in this respect.

2. The good, which God offers to sinners in the gospel, he offers upon the easiest terms that any good can be offered.—This appears from the terms themselves, which are adapted to the character, state and circumstances of every person in the world.—God says to every one without distinction, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come and drink. Ho, every one that is poor, come, and and buy wine and milk without money and without price." Come for all things are now ready. You may have every thing only for accepting. And whosoever will, let him come, vnd take of the water of life freely. We cannot conceive that any good should be offered to any person upon any lower terms, than his being willing to accept it. And upon this condition God offers salvation to sinners and to all sinners without distinction. He requires no more of one than of another; and he requires no more of any, than they are perfectly able to perform, in any situation or circumstances of life. The rich, the poor, the sick, the blind, the lame, are all equally able to accept the terms of salvation. If God made his offers upon hard, difficult, or impossible conditions, they would appear to be insincere and insulting. If he required the poor to be rich, the sick to be well, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, or the lame to walk, as the terms of salvation, it would be out of our power to perceive the sincerity of his offers. But when he offers all good upon no other condition, than a bare willingness to accept it, it is equally out of our power to perceive any insincerity in this respect, in his most gracious invitations. This leads me to observe,

3. That God is heartily willing that sinners should enjoy the great good which he offers to them in the gospel. This is essential to his sincerity in his offers, and this sinners are most apt to distrust.—For in this respect, mankind are most apt to be insincere in their offers to one another. It is very common among all classes of people to make offers of favours, which they do not desire should be accepted. And how often do they actually bestow favours upon those, who, they regret, should enjoy them? This is insincerity. And if God were not heartily willing that sinners should enjoy all the good he offers to them, we could see no sincerity in any of the apparently and professedly kind invitations in the gospel. But he is willing, and has given the most indubitable evidence, that he is heartily willing that sinners should enjoy all the spiritual blessings which he offers to them in the gospel of his grace. For he has provided salvation for all, and provided it at the infinite expense of the death and suffering of the Son of his love. And we cannot conceive why he should, in such a marvellous manner provide salvation for all, if he were not most heartily willing that all should enjoy it. Besides, God stands in the same relation to all mankind, as the Father of their spirits the former of their bodies, and preserver of their life and existence. He must have the same paternal affection to all the sons of Adam, and consequently be as willing to forgive one as to forgive another; to save one as to save another; and to admit one to heaven as to admit another. We cannot see the least ground of distinction in his benevolent affections towards the whole fallen, sinful race of men. Or if there be any ground of distinction, it must arise from the difference there is among sinners, in respect to greater degrees of guilt. But God, in his offers, and in his conduct, pays no regard to this difference. He makes the same offers to great, that he makes to less sinners, and he actually saves some of the most guilty and ill-deserving of the human race. Add to this, he graciously forewarns them of the serious consequences of their accepting or rejecting his merciful proposals.—He assures them that their eternal happiness depends upon their accepting the terms of salvation, and their eternal destruction depends upon their final refusal.—He urges them in the most endearing and affectionate manner to choose life instead of death. And to establish the truth of his declarations, he confirms it by an oath "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" This is the most solemn assurance he can give, that he is heartily willing,

that all men should enjoy all the good which he offers to them in the gospel.

Let us now lay all the circumstances together which have been mentioned. God has the good to bestow which he offers to sinners. God offers the good he has to bestow upon sinners, on the lowest, and easiest terms. And he is heartily willing that the should actually enjoy all the good which he has provided for them, and offers to them. Does not this amount to a moral demonstration that he is *sincere* in his offers and invitations to *all* sinners? Can any thing more than this be implied in any *sincere* offers? If any man should offer another, a large estate that is his own property, and which he heartily desires the person to whom he makes the offer should possess and enjoy, upon the sole condition of his accepting it, could there be the least *insincerity* in his offer? or can we conceive of any thing more necessary to render his offer perfectly *sincere?* No, says every one in this case. But yet the objector may still say, there is a difference between God's making offers to his creatures, and thus making offers to one another. When they make offers to one another, they do not always know beforehand, whether their offers will be accepted, or rejected. But God always knows beforehand, whether his offers will be accepted, or rejected.—Nay more, he has decreed from eternity who shall, and who shall not, accept the offers he makes to sinners in the gospel. So he expressly tells us in his word. "For *many* are *called*, but *few* are *chosen*." In answer to this, I would ask, What difference does God's decree make in this case? Does it alter the terms of salvation? Does it destroy the power of sinners to accept? Or does it alter the feelings of God towards sinners? God is willing, simply considered, that *all* men should be saved. He is as willing that the *non-elect* should be saved, as that the *elect* should, simply considered. It is as disagreeable to him, that the *non-elect* should be destroyed, as that the *elect* should, simply considered. This is all that God declares in his universal invitations to sinners, and it is all that *sincerity* requires him to declare in his invitation to them. It is not necessary, that he should declare his purpose, or his intention, or his determination about the *event* of their accepting, or rejecting his offers. This is no more necessary, than to declare his purpose, or his intention, or determination, whether all to whom he gives commands, shall actually obey or disobey them. His commands declare what is agreeable to him, in its own nature, but not what is agreeable to him, as an event. When he commands all men to love him with all the heart he does not declare that it is his purpose, or intention, or determination that all men shall love him with all the heart. He only declares that it is agreeable to him simply considered, that all men should actually love him supremely. So his invitations to sinners in the gospel, declare only what is agreeable to him, in its own nature, but not what is agreeable to him, as an event. It is the want of making this distinction, which creates all the difficulty of men's seeing the perfect sincerity of God in his universal offers of salvation to sinners. Sincerity in God requires him to make just such a declaration as he does in the text, "I have determined to call all, but I have not chosen all to salvation." Such a declaration exactly expresses his real views and feelings in respect to sinners. But still the objector may say, I am not satisfied, for God not only chooses that some should not accept his offers of salvation, but determines that they should not accept; and he treats them according to his decree, which prevents the non-elect from accepting his invitations.. To which it is easy to reply, that he does not prevent their accepting his offers, if they choose to accept them. He throws no natural difficulty, impediment, or obstruction in the way of their accepting salvation. He never advises them not to accept of his gracious offers, nor gives them the least intimation, that he will not punish them forever, according to his threatenings, if they do neglect or refuse to accept his invitations to come to the gospel feast. But on the other hand he expressly tells them, that he has punished those who made light of his offers and rejected them. "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers." Though they decline accepting his first calls, he calls again and again by different servants. It is said in the parable, "he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage." Now, if he lays no obstacles or impediments in the way of their coming; if he does not advise them not to come, but urges and entreats them, time after time and by different servants to come, and if they have no other excuse for refusing to come, but their love to their farms and merchandise, and other worldly objects; then it must be owing to their own free and voluntary choice, that they make light of his offers of salvation, and not their being not chosen or elected.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If God be sincere in offering salvation to all; then sinners are inconsistent in objecting against

his universal invitations. There is, in this case, a serious controversy between God and sinners, and therefore there must be an inconsistency on one side, or the other. God says he is sincere, but sinners say he is inconsistent, and consequently insincere, in offering salvation to all, when he has chosen only a part to eternal life. If God be sincere in offering salvation to all, though he has chosen but a part to eternal life; then he is consistent in making such a universal offer, and sinners are inconsistent in objecting against it. But it has been shown, that God is consistent and sincere, in inviting all, though he has not chosen all to accept of salvation. For he has provided salvation for all; he offers salvation to all upon the lowest terms; and he is willing that all should accept and enjoy the salvation which he offers to them. These three things render his offers sincere and consequently consistent. But if there be no insincerity or inconsistency on God's part, it unavoidably follows, that sinners are inconsistent, in objecting against his sincerity and consistency. All that sinners have to say is, that God has decreed to save those, who are willing to accept of salvation, and to destroy all, who are unwilling to accept of salvation. And who can see any insincerity or inconsistency in this? He has decreed to treat both the elect and non-elect according to their choice, and who can see any injustice, or inconsistency, or insincerity in this? The willingness of some to accept of the offers of salvation, throws no obstacle in the way of others being willing to accept the offers of salvation. And God's making some willing to accept the offers of salvation, throws no obstacle in the way of others accepting the offers of salvation. And God's choosing from eternity to make some willing to accept the offers of salvation, throws no obstacle in the way of others accepting the offers of salvation.

2. If God sincerely offers salvation to all; then none have the least excuse for neglecting to accept his offer. If he has provided salvation for all; if he has offered salvation to all, upon the lowest terms; and if he is willing that all should accept and enjoy the salvation he offers; then his offers of salvation to all are infinitely kind and gracious, and worthy of the acceptation of all; so that none can justly or reasonably excuse themselves for despising or neglecting so great salvation as he freely offers and they stand in perishing need of. But we find, that those who were once and again invited to come to the gospel feast made light of the invitation, and presumed to excuse themselves for not coming, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. Those who have been invited since, have generally attempted

to excuse themselves for not coming to the same feast. Though few presume to excuse themselves for not coming at all; yet multitudes excuse themselves for not coming at present. They plead that they are pre-engaged and too busy to come at present, though they sincerely intend to come, when they find a more convenient season, or when they have no cares, nor concerns, nor pursuits of more importance than the salvation of their souls. This is the excuse of the careless, the thoughtless, and stupid, who make light of the invitations of the gospel.—Those who make this excuse, the parable tells us, will be rejected, condemned and destroyed. Others make a more specious excuse.—They say they are unworthy to come and partake of the rich provisions of the feast, and to associate with those who cordially accept the invitation. But this is a groundless excuse, for all are invited however mean, unworthy, or ill deserving they are. When the servant came and told the master of the house, that those who were first invited rejected the invitation, he was displeased, and said to his servants, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto his servant, Go out into the highways, and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." Here all are not only invited, but commanded to come in, notwithstanding their meanness, unworthiness, and ill desert. We know, therefore, that this excuse can be of no avail. But there are some, who make another, and as they imagine, a more serious and solid excuse for not embracing the offers of the gospel. They confidently say, that they cannot embrace them. They say, they have desired to embrace them; that they have endeavoured to embrace them; & that they have used all the means in their power to embrace them. They have read the gospel; they have heard the gospel preached, and they have often and fervently prayed, that they might embrace it; but they have never been able to embrace it; but the more they have thought, and read, and heard, and prayed, the more they have realized and felt their inability to comply with the offers of mercy. This certainly looks like a sincere excuse, and would be a solid excuse, if the difficulty of their embracing the gospel lay in any thing else, than the selfishness of their hearts. The only cause, why they cannot love God supremely, is, that they love themselves supremely. The only cause, why they cannot submit to his sovereignty, is, that they are afraid, that God does not love them, so well as they love themselves, and may sacrifice their interest to his own glory and the general good of the universe.—They value their own interest and happiness more than the glory of God and the interest of the whole universe, and rather perish than give up their own interest and happiness, on any consideration whatsoever. This is the only cause of their being unable to embrace the gospel. God knows that this is the only ground of their excuse, and that this ground of their excuse is the source of all their criminality; and therefore instead of accepting this excuse, he will condemn and punish them forever for making it, unless they repent and give it up. If they neglect to come to the gospel feast on any account; or if they come without the wedding garment, they will be forever speechless and self-condemned.

3. If God is sincere in his offers of salvation to sinners, then he is unspeakably gracious in making such offers to them. The grace he displays in offering them salvation, is as great as the salvation he offers. And this is as great a salvation as he can offer, or as they can receive. They are by nature dead in trespasses and sins; but God offers to deliver them from the power, and dominion of sin, and to sanctify and purify them from all iniquity. They are under the condemnation of his holy and righteous law; but God offers to pardon all their transgressions, free them from the curse of the law, and save them from the wrath to come. They are poor, and wretched, and miserable; but God offers to give them all the blessings of his heavenly kingdom.—They are vile and odious creatures, who deserve to be banished from the presence of God, and the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, and doomed to dwell forever with the impure spirits in prison: but God offers to put them in the mansion of the blessed. They have forfeited all good at the hands of God; but he offers to bestow all the good upon them which they are capable of enjoying through every period of their eternal existence. Now can there be greater, or more valuable, or more necessary, or more durable blessings than these, which God freely offers to all sinners, upon the lowest and easiest terms? In these offers, therefore, God displays the richest and most astonishing grace. The apostle having given a striking representation of the wretched and guilty state of sinners by nature, proceeds to give a more striking, though faint description of the marvellous grace of God in their salvation. Speaking in the name of christians, he says, "But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath

raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus." Such a salvation God has actually bestowed upon sinners, and such a salvation he now freely offers to all, who will cordially accept it. Such exceeding riches of his grace God now displays in his offers of salvation to sinners in the gospel. And are not such offers of so great salvation, worthy of all acceptation, by those who deserve and stand exposed to eternal destruction?

4. If God be consistent in calling more than he has elected to eternal life; then he is consistent in every thing, respecting his calls to sinners, of which they are apt to complain. In particular,

He is consistent in sending the offers of salvation to a part, and not to the whole human race.—As he has a right to call some whom he has not elected, so he has a right not to call some whom he has not elected. He calls all where he sends the gospel; but he does not call any where he does not send the gospel. This many have called insincerity and inconsistency in God; but there is no ground for this objection. If he has a right to call some whom he has not elected, he must have as good a right not to call some whom he has not elected. He may have good reasons for sending the gospel to one nation and not to another, and for calling all where he sends the gospel, and for not calling any where he does not send it. Those who live under the light of the gospel, have no reason to call the consistency of God in question, because he does not send the gospel and the offers of salvation to all the heathen world. If any have reason to complain, they are the only persons who have reason to complain, but they have no reason to complain; for they are sinners and deserve to be denied every temporal and spiritual favour.

Again, God is consistent in calling so long as he does, those whom he has not elected. It has been shown, that he is consistent in calling them, notwithstanding he has not chosen them; and if this be consistent, then it is equally consistent that he should call them time after time and year after year. even to the last moments of life though he does not intend to save them at last. He may answer the same important purposes by calling them so long and using so many means with them, as by calling them once. As he puts a price in their hands when he knows they have no heart to improve it, so he may continue that price in their hands as long as they live, though he knows, that they never will improve it; and so make the offers of life a savour of death unto death and aggravation of their final ruin.

Again, since God is consistent

in offering salvation to the non-elect; so he is equally consistent in punishing them forever, for their free, voluntary refusal of his gracious and sincere offers. This many call inconsistent, insincere and unjust. Since the goodness of God in offering them salvation on the easiest and best terms, does not lead them to repentance, but to impenitence and unbelief, they justly deserve to be punished for all their sins, and especially for their sins of impenitence and unbelief. They have as fair an opportunity to embrace the gospel and secure the salvation of their souls, as the elect have; but they reject the offers, which the elect embrace; and why should they complain if God treats them according to their own free, voluntary conduct? The truth is, God is consistent, but they are inconsistent. God's ways are equal, but their ways are unequal.—They abuse the goodness, patience, and forbearance of God, & treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and righteous judgment of God.

5. If God be consistent in offering salvation not only to the elect, but to the non-elect; then it is of great importance, that all men should see this consistency in the divine conduct. It is found to be very hard to make men see this consistency; not because they are incapable of seeing it, but because they are naturally extremely unwilling to see it. They can bear to hear, that God has chosen some to salvation; and are even pleased with the doctrine of personal election to eternal life, if it be preached separately and unconnected with any other doctrine. They are not so well pleased to hear, that God has passed by, or reprobated some of the human race; though they can bear to hear even the doctrine of reprobation, if it be preached separately and unconnected with any other doctrine. But they cannot very patiently endure to hear both the doctrine of election and of reprobation brought into view at once in connection with the sincerity of God in his offers of salvation to all. This they say is puzzling preaching. But it is not my design to puzzle, but to instruct, in this discourse. Christ taught that "many are called, but few are chosen," though he knew that his declaration would puzzle some *then*, and ten thousand more in time to come Why then did he make the declaration? It was because he knew that God had called some whom he had not chosen; because he knew that he was as sincere in calling those whom he had not chosen, as in calling those whom he had chosen; because he knew, that men might see the consistency of his calling those whom he had not chosen; and because he knew that it was of vast importance, that men should see the consistency of these most interesting truths. But there is ground

to suppose, that some are pleased with the doctrine of election because they think they are elected and safe. Some are displeased with the doctrine of election, because they doubt whether they are elected. And others dread the doctrine of reprobation, because they fear that they are reprobated. None of these selfish persons wish to see the consistency of the doctrine of election and the doctrine of reprobation with one another, and with the divine sincerity in offering salvation to all. Those who are pleased with the doctrine of election, merely because they think it secures their salvation, are not at all concerned to knew whether God is consistent in choosing them and passing by others, because they value their own good more than the good of all other men & all other beings. And those who hate the doctrine of reprobation, merely because they fear that they are reprobated, are not at all concerned to see the consistency of God in calling them, when he has reprobated them; for they had rather all the elect should be destroyed, than that they themselves should be finally lost. But neither those who love, nor those who hate the doctrines of election and reprobation in their real and inseparable connection, can cordially embrace the gospel which contains these two doctrines, and requires men to approve of both, as consistent with each other and with the sincerity of God, in calling those whom he has not elected. Hence it is of vast importance that preachers should clearly prove the doctrines of election and reprobation, and clearly illustrate their consistency with each other, and with the sincerity of God in offering salvation to all, though he has chosen but a part of mankind. Those who understand and love these two doctrines in their harmony and connection, are prepared to understand and embrace all the other doctrines of the gospel, and to praise, and glorify, and enjoy God in the kingdom of heaven, where those doctrines will be a permanent source of gratitude and joy to all that are redeemed from among men.

6. If the gospel of the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teaches us that "many are called but few are chosen;" then it places those who enjoy it in a very critical and interesting situation. If men believe and love both these doctrines, the gospel will save them; but if they disbelieve and hate both these doctrines, the gospel will destroy them. They cannot believe one without believing the other; and they cannot disbelieve one without disbelieving the other.—If they believe, that some are chosen, they must believe, that some are not chosen. If they believe some are chosen, they must believe, that some will be saved. If they believe, that none are chosen, they must believe, that none

will be saved. If they cordially approve of God's saving the elect and destroying the non-elect, they cordially approve of the gospel, which must save them. But if they heartily disapprove of God's saving the elect, and destroying the non-elect, they heartily disapprove of the gospel, which must destroy them. There can be no neutrality in this case.—Every one must believe, or disbelieve the gospel. Every one must love, or hate the gospel.—The kingdom of heaven is come nigh you, and you must enter in, or refuse to enter in. You know that many are called, but few are chosen. It is vain to hope that you can enter into the kingdom of God, without believing and loving both these truths. You have heard them from the mouth of the only Saviour, and you cannot forget them. They will meet you in health and in sickness, in life and in death, in time and eternity, and determine your final and eternal destination.—God is now sincerely calling all, and it is as much as the soul is worth, for any one to reject, or make light of the call, or attempt to excuse himself. The door of mercy is open, and all things are now ready for your reception; and how can you escape, if ye neglect so great salvation.

For the Christian Magazine.

Messrs Editors,

If you shall judge the following worthy of insertion in your Magazine, it is at your service. It is an account of a conversion which took place several years ago, and the facts are stated from personal knowledge.

A. B. now Mrs. C. was a young woman of respectable connections in common life, cheerful in her disposition, of vigorous health, uncommonly active, and agreeably situated among her relatives and friends. She was warm in her friendship; and, though the farthest possible from an unworthy action, she loved the company of her young companions, and was fond of an occasional hour of gaiety and mirth in their society.

Her conversion took place as I have said, several years ago.—She had been at her uncle's to pass an evening, with some friends. She went with rather more reflection than usual, though nothing particular lay on her mind; and she spent the time much as she had often spent an evening, in nothing which would commonly be thought improper indeed, but yet in that light and trifling manner which is but too characteristic of youth in general.

She was living, at the time, with her sister who was married and settled in the neighbourhood. In returning home she must necessarily pass a certain street up which she always went in going to the house of God. She had passed it in a similar way an hundred times before perhaps, and always with as little reflection as she had passed any other street. But now the Lord's time had come, and she felt impressions to which, till now, she had been a stranger. The slight seriousness which had hung about her mind through the evening was now suddenly changed into most awful solemnity. Eternity seemed but a step from her.

A. B. had been in general religiously educated; and formerly she had received many lessons of religious instruction from an eminently pious man, then no more. Her sister too and family had great regard for religion. But A. B. now felt, for the first time, a lasting conviction of entire depravity.

The particular thought which the Holy Spirit was pleased to employ as a medium of conviction, was this—it was as she passed the street above mentioned—"Perhaps I shall never pass that street again; and up where I have so often been to the house of prayer, perhaps I shall go no more." This was the thought, nor could she dislodge it from her mind. It followed her home, and caused her a sleepless night.

Nor did the night pass with only this thought in mind. It was the rallying point for others, and a multitude that came like armed men and overwhelmed her in trouble for her soul. She was led to the thought of her guilt and God's holiness, and to all the deep revolvings of solicitude, which are wont to fill a truly wounded spirit.'

Her sister and brother-in-law were professors of religion; but convictions like those of A. B. were strange things in their family. They neither knew them in themselves nor in their acquaintances. The appearance of A. B. therefore, was the more observed—and impressive. On meeting a member of the family in the morning to whom she was particularly attached, she said—after a considerable time before she could say any thing—'will you forgive me?' It was spoken with a flood of tears. Utterance was denied to none and she remained in silence. Similar, at first, was her address to almost all her friends, though they, like this one knew of nothing in which she had injured them to which she could refer, and could only understand her in reference to what she felt in general for having so long neglected Christ.

In this state of mind she continued several days, perhaps two or three weeks, during which she found no rest and no peace. The impressions on her mind, though variable in degree, were, in general, pungent and powerful, and, at times, exceedingly so. She appeared to apprehend spiritual things almost as sensible as material things are apprehended.—

The purity and holiness of God; the odiousness of sin; her desert of punishment on account of sin, and especially her defilement with it; God's readiness to pardon were she only penitent and believing in Christ; the tender compassion of the Redeemer; and yet her awful exposure while continuing as she was:—these, and similar thoughts seemed present to her mind as living, sensible realities. And it was striking to observe, how, from her appearance, there grew insensibly in every beholder a conviction of the truth and importance of religion. After a considerable time, a gradual composure and peace succeeded to pungent conviction and deep distress.

The change in A. B. was very manifest to all. She had no instantaneous consciousness of it herself, and the moment of release was not so sensibly marked by her as it is wont to be by many. But to all her acquaintances the change was unquestionable. With occasional interruptions from doubts whether her experience was genuine, her state was now that of uniform quietness and peace.—There was also much of joy and happiness. All was calm. She was modest and rather reserved as to herself. But her tone of sentiment and moral feeling was highly evangelical and decided, and her apparent happiness in thoughts of God, and Christ, and heaven, and glory, was marked by all. Her anxiety for others was noticable from the first. She was now also abundant in reading the bible and in prayer. And thus she continued to live while I knew her, ten years, and till about the time of her marriage, when a removal to a distant part of the country prevented my further particular acquaintance with her case. From occasional opportunities of seeing her still, and especially from the high estimation in which I know her to be held as a christian by all who know her best, I feel warranted in giving assurance that she adorns the doctrine of God our Savior.

But what I have in view is something further. And what I wish particularly here is, to call the attention of christian readers to what, from this, we see may be the importance of even a single conversion in common life. Judging from the effects of this, it may be immense.

As has been suggested already, the family in which A. B. lived though respectful towards religion and themselves, the united head being professors, was not acquainted with experimental religion. And tho' they always, with scarcely a single failure, attended public worship on the Sabbath, and kept it strict at home, yet they not unfrequently complained, if the doctrine of our depravity, or of regeneration, or of the election of grace was discussed. They believed these things, they would say. No doubt they are true. But they did not think them profitable subjects.

But the time had come when things were soon to assume a new aspect. Two in the family were much affected by what they saw in A. B. and in the course of a year, hoped they had found mercy. It may be observed here too, that for aught that is known they both sustain to this day an irreproachable christian character. But A. B. and these her two friends were in the midst of a dark region.—Lightness and vanity had long had possession of the minds of the young throughout the place.—Nor was the church, in many of its members, very spiritual. Many professors of religion lived without prayer in their families, or even the reading of the scriptures except on the Sabbath and very seldom perhaps on other days.—It was also the custom for persons to make a profession of religion, or unite with the church, without pretending to have experienced religion, in their hearts; and as it would seem merely to provide for the more consistent baptism of their children. But now the meal had received the leaven. A. B. and her two friends made the place a subject of constant prayer. One more about this time, and much in the same lonely way, became serious and obtained hope. Things continued in this state four or five years, though a considerable blow was struck by the change in these few and their coming forth, most of them, in a profession of religion. Not a few were more thoughtful; and one more now became hopefully pious. And here it may be observed of him, that he afterwards received an education preparatory, and is now a missionary among the Heathen, under the patronage of the American board. He lived in the same family with A. B.; and from about this time uncommon solicitude was felt for the family, and especially for the heads of the family by A. B. and now by her three friends. They conversed and prayed over their state. And indeed religion was beginning to be more and more prominent in the family.—But there was no special seriousness on the minds of any more of them for some time. At length, however, Mrs.——the sister of A. B. and wife of Mr.——became impressed. And the praying members of the family were of course encouraged. They resolved to set a part an hour for prayer for themselves without the knowledge of the family, when the salvation of the family should be made the subject of particular supplication. Mean while the husband became impressed; and but a few days had passed, when, as they rose, very early one Sabbath morning, for their little meeting, who should they meet, on going down stairs, but Mr.——and Mrs.——both rejoicing in hope and praising the Lord. It was almost too much for A. B. and her friends; and all mingled tears of joy. Then—which was a new thing and a strange thing--Mr.——led in prayer. Though he had been a professor twenty years, he felt that he had never known the joys of true religion before. So thought also his wife, who had not been a professor so long by two or three years.

The influence of A. B's. conversion had hitherto been comparatively confined; but now it was to be felt more widely. Mr.—— her brother-in-law could not rest. He knew there were others in the church in the same state in which he had been; and trusting in the Lord, that his eyes had been opened, he wished some way to make his case known. Not many days passed before he had an opportunity to address a small neighborhood assembly. He simply stated his case. 'I did not make a profession thoughtlessly,' said he. 'I did it from a sense of duty. But O,' continued he, 'I never knew the depravity of my heart, and how much I needed Christ. I never felt that I must be born again; but vainly trusted that somehow I had religion and did love God.--But,' he added, 'I have seen the emptiness of it all. My heart has appeared in a light in which I never saw it before—and now I hope have truly found the Savior. He is altogether lovely and precious. Havng thus stated his case, he then entreated any who might be in circumstances similar to what his had been, to examine themselves and make thorough work of repentance. The few words he said had a powerful effect."--He had been regarded as among the most religious of all the church; and if such was found to be his case, it was time indeed for others to look around. Although some scoffed, the consequence was as it has proved to this day in hopeful charity, that not less than five or six who were with him members of the church, were brought to see themselves and repent.

But this is not all. One of A. B's friends had himself friends; & they through him or otherwise were several of them affected. Some of the children also of those who had been so long members of the church, seeing their parents impressed, became impressed themselves. Thus considerable seriousness spread through the society.

On the whole, not to mention others who apparently became pious in consequence of A. B's conversion, there may be reckoned as the fruit of it, first, one missionary among the Heathen; second, one pastor at home; third, two females also sharing with their husbands the burden of the sacred calling; fourth, three candidates looking forward to the ministry; and, fifth, one other young man also who died in the midst of his studies--not without leaving, however, a lasting remembrance in the minds of those who knew him of his sincere piety and his fervent desire to serve God in the ministry.

While he admires the sovereignty and grace of God, let, then, every christian reader persevere in prayer for those around him, even though all be darkness and death, assured that though but one be converted at first, many, and some missionaries and pastors in the church, may at length be gathered to the praise and glory of the Redeemer. FIDELIS.

From the Philadelphian.

A SOLEMN WARNING TO MERCHANTS AND MEN OF BUSINESS.

During the progress of one of the recent revivals of religion within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church among others who assembled in the weekly anxious meeting, on a certain evening a middle-aged man in a genteel habit entered the room and seated himself in the midst of this enquiring circle.

The minister who used to converse with all present on such occasions, soon came to him and taking him by the hand, affectionately inquired whether he understood the object of this meeting: and whether by his presence he designed to signify his determination of immediately seeking an interest in Christ. To these and other similar questions he answered with an emphasis in the affirmative. His soul appeared to be in agony.

After listening to the remarks which were made, as applicable to the case of awakened sinners, he, together with the others retired. For several weeks in succession, he was found in this meeting—still deeply exercised, but without having received any relief.

On one of these occasions, as he was about to retire, he was asked why he thus delayed complying with the terms of salvation—why he declined throwing himself upon the mercy of Christ, by submitting unconditionally to his demands. Others who had been awakened more recently than himself were daily fleeing to Christ their refuge.

His case, in consequence of his thus lingering, was continually becoming more and more alarming. He was therefore urged to lose no time in searching out that bitter thing, (whatever it might be) that prevented his finding mercy, and that engrossed his affections, to the exclusion of the Savior.—"What is there (said this ministering friend to him,) with which you cannot part for an interest in the love of Christ?" Said the gentleman in reply, "I cannot now give you the particulars of my alarming case, but I will thank you to call at my house tomorrow, for I wish very much to have a conversation with you."—The next day, in compliance with this request, the clergyman called on him. The gentleman met him at the door, and immediately conducted him to the parlour. After signifying to his family that he wished them to retire, he turned and addressed himself to the minister in substance as follows:—"Mr. ———, knowing that you were ignorant of the history of my life, I have had a desire for some time to see you under favorable circumstances for a free conversation. In regard to the communication which I am now about to make to you for the first, and for the purpose of obtaining your advice, I have to acknowledge that I have resisted the dictates of conscience, which have long urged me to this step, until I can resist no longer. I am now, as you may be led to conclude, in easy circumstances as respects this world. About one year since, I removed from the city of——— to this country seat, with an accumulation of property which would warrant me in retiring from the pressure of an extensive mercantile business for the enjoyments of domestic life. My happiness since I left the city has been uninterrupted until the commencement of this revival. The scenes which I have since witnessed have very forcibly called to my mind the resolutions I often used to form, for the purpose of pacifying my conscience, while in eager pursuit of the world, that after I had accumulated a certain amount, I would retire from the noise and business of the city, and spend the remainder of my days in preparing for a better world than this. With these resolutions in recollection, I have often felt, as you have urged me to an immediate decision, that I had *now* no excuse remaining.

I have leisure and every convenience for attending upon all the means of grace. For several weeks past, my mind has been more excited perhaps than it ever was before, on the subject of my welfare in eternity. I have tended your anxious meetings; I have attentively listenedto your preaching, and I see clearly the propriety of immediately surrendering myself into the hands of God as many others have done in the mean time.

I have examined myself, agreeably to your request, for the purpose of ascertaining, if possible, the obstacle in the way of my salvation; and I am now, for the sake of relieving my mind and knowing my duty, about to reveal to you what I never revealed to any man.

While engaged in mercantile business, as many others have done, I allowed myself in the *innocent practice*, (as custom would seem to render it,) of misrepresenting and over-reaching, not even exercising bowels of mercy for the poor, the widow or the fatherless. And, in many instances, my eager grasp for gain has resulted in bringing poverty and distress into many families.

Wherever I could render a claim *legal*, the law of *right* or *wrong* was not consulted. And in one instance, by failure in business to a large amount, I ruined certain individuals; and although I have long since had it in my power to relieve them from distressing poverty, I have until this day been inexorable to their pleas. I have, in short, discovered to you the manner, in which myself, and as I fear many others, have secured the treasures of this world.—Now, the question with which I have felt myself *straitened*, and for the solution of which I ask your advice, is this:—Is it my duty so far as my recollection can make discovery, to restore to the full amount wherever individuals have suffered loss through my injustice? But, before you answer this question, let me apprize you that, in so doing, I must probably surrender my property to the last farthing. And, to tell you the truth, although my conscience has given me no peace for several weeks past, in consequence of my refusing to correct every act of injustice, however trifling it might have appeared at the time of its occurrence; yet I *cannot* make up my mind, as I am now passing into the decline of life, however reasonable it may be, to surrender all my possessions into the hands of those whom I have injured."

As he gave this relation it was very apparent that there was an alarming struggle between the dictates of conscience and the unyielding inclinations of a proud heart. After a short pause, said the minister, in reply—"My dear friend, I have listened with the deepest interest to your recital; nor can I wonder that a review of your life should fill your soul with anguish: but I was sorry to hear you say that you cannot make up your mind to do what both reason and conscience decide to be an act of justice.

Your case is indeed a peculiar one, and I feel that it requires the wisdom of some one more experienced than myself, to designate to you, in this awful dilemma, the path of duty. But remember! no man can be saved until he places such a value upon his soul, that he would be willing to make any and every sacrifice for its salvation.* No man *can be pardoned*, until he is willing to perform whatever God commands however self-denying and inconvenient it may be."

With these remarks he left him: but, (as he afterwards said) not without strong apprehensions that, rather than perform evident duty, himself being judge, he would cling to his possessions with an unyielding grasp, and risk the fearful consequences.

The minister embraced the first opportunity of consulting some of his most judicious brethren; and after listening to the painful circumstances of his case, they were unanimous and unhesitatingly decided in the opinion, that the word of God and the dictates of his conscience were in union; and that if he could not " bring his mind" to an act of justice, it clearly evinced two facts:

1. *That his sorrows for the errors of his past life did not amount to any thing like ingenious repentance*, else he would be willing to correct them at any expense.

2. *That his " easy circumstances" were held dearer to his affections than the salvation of his soul*, else he would have felt no difficulty or hesitation in practically solving the fearful *problem*—" What shall it pofit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?"

But to conclude this affecting narrative. A few days only elapsed before the solemn interview was renewed; and, awful to relate, it now appeared that, instead of implicitly obeying the voice of God and of justice, without any darling reserve, this convicted and " almost persuaded" man had returned to the world—virtually bidding the Holy Ghost, which had aroused conscience from her slumbers—" Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." And what is now most to be feared, if not most expected, is, that, instead of ever retracing his steps, he will hold fast his possessions, and finally be found among the wretched, who for the love of money have already drowned themselves in destruction and perdition, and pierced themselves through with everlasting sorrows.

MARTUS.

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*We presume that nothing more is here meant than that a higher estimation should be set on the soul than on any other personal interest.

NATURAL ABILITY.

Natural ability is the intellectual and bodily strength of a man to perform every action which God requires of him. Ability relates to action: and all men, according to this acceptation of the word, are able to perform what God requires. For, God is infinitely reasonable in his requirements. It is as much impossible for God to require more of us than we have intellectual and corporeal strength to perform, as it is for him to be unjust. There is a perfect correspondence between the commands of God, and the natural ability of the subjects of his command. Accordingly he does not command the idiot to be a philosopher; nor those who are naturally blind, deaf and dumb, to see, hear or speak. Nor does he require infants to do the work of men: for they are unable. God requires no natural impossibilities. But he requires those actions and those only which men are able to perform if they choose to obey him. Accordingly he requires children to obey their parents; parents to provide for their children; and the rich to give to the poor. In a word, God commands all men every where to repent, and love him with all the heart, because they have natural ability to comply with the command. And, I may challenge an instance either under the law or gospel, of God's requiring men to perform, that which exceeds their natural ability. The command of God never exceeds the natural ability of man. Accordingly he says, are not my ways equal?—And, if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Dr. S. Spring.

From the Utica Repository.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—BY BUNYANUS.

CHAPTER V.

Then the Interpeter took the pilgrims out into a field, which they saw a man carefully ploughing, and preparing it to cast in the seed. Then he bid the pilgrims ask the man why he did so; and the man answered, that he carefully prepared his ground, and sowed his seed, because he believed that all things take place according to an immutable decree; and that this decree establishes a firm connection between the means and the end; and that if it was decreed that he should reap a harvest, it was equally decreed that he should plough his field, and sow his seed. He was therefore using the appointed means, in order to secure the desired end.

Then the Interpreter took them to an adjoining field, which was untilled, and growing up with weeds, while the owner was sitting idle, with his hands folded, and looking at his ground, to see what would take place. So the Interpreter bid the pilgrims ask him why he did so differently from his neighbor, and he answered, that he did not, like him, believe that events take place according to any fixed and established order; and consequently, that he thought he should be just as likely to reap a harvest, if he did nothing to his field, as if he should cultivate it with ever so much diligence; and not wishing to bestow his labor for nought he was taking his ease and waiting to see what his ground would produce.

Then said Thoughtful, I think I understand the meaning of these things. But the men act contrary to what is frequently represented as the natural effect of their belief. The belief that every thing takes place according to a fixed decree is often thought to be adapted to discourage men from using means, instead of being an encouragement.

In. That is often said, indeed; but it must be said without much reflection. These men act in exact consistency with their belief. The first believes that all things take place in a regular order, which is established by an immutable decree. He believes that this decree establishes a firm connection between the means and the end. And this belief prompts him to use means in order to attain the end; for he knows that if the means fail, the end will also fail. While the other man does not believe the doctrine of decrees at all. He does not believe that there is any established order of events. And consequently, he feels no inducement to use means; for he thinks every event is matter of chance, and that he is as likely to attain the end in one way as in another, without means, as with them. It is certain, whatever may be pretended, that men never do use any means to attain an end, any farther than they suppose there is some established connection between the means and the end; that is, they never use means any farther than they believe in the doctrine of decrees. Some, indeed who wish to keep God out of their sight, call this a law of nature; but that is only another name for the fixed decree of the Author of nature. And here we see the self-contradiction of those who say, if it is decreed they shall be saved, they shall be whether they use the means of salvation or not; or if it is decreed they shall be lost, they shall be, let them do what they will. Either they do not believe the decrees or they love sin & are determined to live in it. If they believed the means and the end were connected together by an immutable decree, and had a sincere desire to secure the salvation of their souls, they would be disposed to use the means of salvation with all diligence. They would expect that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Then he took them to another place, where a judge was seated upon his tribunal, and several prisoners were standing before him, who had been engaged in rebellion against their lawful government; and on due trial had been convicted of their crimes, and were now about to receive their sentence. The judge spoke to them on the blessings of good government, and pointed out the enormity of their offence, in endeavoring to destroy it and introduce anarchy and confusion. He pointed out the wisdom and equity of the law, which doomed them to confinement for life in the public prison. He shewed how reasonable it was that those who had endeavored to sacrifice the interests of a whole community, to the gratification of their own wicked passions, should now have their own interests given up in order to secure those of the community. He pointed out, for the warning of others, the misery they had thus brought upon themselves; and in a most feeling manner, pronounced upon them the sentence of the law. He then delivered them into the custody of the officers whose business it was to put the sentence in execution, charging them, at the same time, to inflict no more upon them than the law demanded. Then I saw, that all the spectators were deeply moved and with one voice acknowledged the justice and humanity of the judge, and the propriety of the sentence which had been pronounced. And even the prisoners themselves had nothing to say against it, but acknowledged both his justice and his goodness.

Then said the Interpreter to the pilgrims, Take notice of these things, and settle them deeply in your minds.

Pil. We do so. But what is the explanation?

In. Did you notice the appearance of the judge?

Pil. We did.

In. Did he appear hard, or cruel, or malignant?

Pil. Not at all. He appeared compassionate and merciful, tho' strictly just.

In. Did he seem to have any regard for the good of the criminals whom he condemned?

Pil. He did seem to have the tenderest regard for them, and was much moved when he pronounced the sentence.

In. If he had any regard for their good, why did he not acquit them?

Pil. He said that the public good required their condemnation, and it was right that their private interest should be given up in order to secure the interests of the community, which they had endeavored to destroy.

In. Just so. The judge acted a perfectly disinterested part.—He valued the happiness of the criminals according to its real worth; but he valued the good of the community more, because it is worth more. And so he gave up a less good to secure a greater good which was doing right. And the criminals themselves felt constrained to acknowledge both his justice and his goodness. This case then illustrates the conduct of our Lord the King, in the treatment of his incorrigible enemies. He does not pronounce the sentence of the law upon them, and doom them to perpetual confinement in his public prison, because he has any pleasure in their sufferings. He is full of compassion and of great mercy. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked." He values their happiness according to its real worth; but he values the public good more than the happiness of those individuals, because it is worth more.—And so, to secure the public good he gives up the private good of those individuals, and dooms them to suffer the punishment which their crimes deserve. And when he shall do this, in the presence of the whole assembled universe, they will all be convinced that he is just and good, in so doing. Even his enemies will have nothing to say against it; but every mouth will be stopped.

Then he took them to another place, where he showed them a vast crowd of people, of a most wretched appearance, clothed in rags, and starving with hunger.—Near them stood a large store house, abundantly furnished with provisions and clothing for them all. And several servants of the owner of the storehouse were employed in going round among the miserable crowd, and inviting them to come to the storehouse and receive a supply for all their wants "without money and without price." But the pilgrims, beheld, that, when invited, they "all with one consent began to make excuse." So the servants returned and told their lord that they could not persuade any to come. Then their lord said, they deserve indeed to perish with hunger; but yet, I will not have all this provision made, and fail in my benevolent purposes. Go again, and invite them. So the servants went again, and repeated their invitations, and added many entreaties; but still without success till at length their lord sent an invisible agent who had power over the heart, with directions to go to certain individuals of his selection and make them "willing in the day of his power." So when he touched their hearts, they complied with the invitations addressed to them, and came to the store house, and received freely whatsoever they needed. But the rest still continued to refuse; and some of them treated the servants who invited them very ill, and loaded them with every kind of obloquy and reproach.

Then said the Interpreter, have you considered these things? Why do these miserable creatures perish with hunger?

Th. There appears to be enough in the storehouse for them all, so that those who perish, do not perish for want of provision made for them.

In. No, they perish through their own fault. They will have no one to blame but themselves.

Th. But will not the provision be wasted? Why was provision made for them all? Did not their lord know that none would accept it but such as his invisible agent made willing?

In. Yes; their lord knew it. But the provision will not be wasted. Their lord does nothing in vain. And if it answered no other purpose, it was necessary that provision should be made sufficient for the whole, in order that all might be sincerely invited to come; and that they might know that the offer was sincerely made, so that they might be fully convinced that they could blame no one but themselves. And besides, this provision is of a peculiar nature.

As the brazen serpent lost none of its efficacy to cure the bitten Israelites after any number had looked upon it, so this provision suffers no diminution by the number of those who partake of it, but always continues in the same abundance, after thousands and millions have been supplied. Just as much was necessary to be made for those who are supplied; and no more would have been necessary for the supply of all.

Th. But will not some of them complain of their lord for not making all willing when he had the power to do it?

In. They may complain, for they are very unreasonable creatures; and are seeking occasion to complain of their lord. But who will think they have reason to complain, when they have their own choice, and might come if they would? What reasonable man will ever complain of another for giving him that which he chooses for himself?

Th. Please to explain this to us more fully.

In. Those miserable objects which you saw are rebels against their rightful lord and sovereign, and by their own wicked and foolish conduct have brought themselves into their present wretched state. They are starving with hunger, and clothed in rags; and they must perish soon if they are not relieved. Their lord, as you see, in the greatness of his compassion, has made abundant provision for them all, and offers it to them freely, on the easy condition of their accepting it as a free gift to the ill-deserving.—But they will not accept it. They hate their lord and choose rather to perish, than to be indebted to him for any favour. Such are the rebels against our Lord the King. Such were we all by nature, being "children of wrath even as others." The Prince Immanuel has by his death, made, abundant provision for the whole world. And in consequence of this provision, his servants are sent forth to invite all to come. All might come if they would.—But so great is the perverseness of their hearts, that they will not come to him that they might have life. And now, he might justly leave them all to perish in their sin and folly. But he has graciously determined that they shall not all perish. He has determined to leave some of them to perish, for the glory of his justice, and to make others the monuments of his grace. And he sends forth the Holy Comforter to change their hearts and make them willing. As soon as he touches their hearts, by his invisible, but Almighty agency, they become willing, and freely and voluntarily accept the offered mercy, while the rest perish in their sins, and receive according to the just demerit of their crimes. But you see, that though there is abundant provision of food and clothing in the store house, it does no good to any till they come and receive it. They must come & accept it as a free gift. This is the condition which they must perform, or die. This shows the difference between the work of atonement and the work of redemption. The atonement consisted in making the provision. Redemption consists in making them partakers of that provision. The atonement is sufficient for all, but it is only applied to a part. The atonement has been styled a cover for sin. The garments laid up in the store house may be styled a cover for the nakedness of those wretched creatures; but they do not actually become a cover of their nakedness, till they put them on.

Then he took them again to a prison, and looking into it, they saw a number of criminals who had been tried and found guilty of certain crimes. They were condemned already, and the wrath of their King abode upon them.—And as they looked, they saw the King's officers come to the prison with a free and full pardon for a part of them, and a warrant for the execution of the sentence upon the rest. So a part of them were set at liberty, and the rest were led away to suffer the sentence of the law.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this?

In. You see here an illustraion of the sovereignty of our Lord, the King. As these men were all justly condemned for their crimes, so all his rebellious subjects are condemned already.—But as the end of punishment, in every good government, is not the gratification of malignant feelings, but the promotion of the public good, and the sentence of the law is executed only where the public good requires it, and when the public good will admit of it mercy is exercised in the pardon of offenders; so our Lord the King will promote the honor of his name, and the highest interest of his holy kingdom, by extending pardoning mercy to some, and executing the penalty of his law upon others, exactly as the public good requires. But, as you saw, that all these criminals were guilty & justly condemned, and their King, having determined to show mercy to a part of them, made his own selection of the objects of his mercy; so our Lord the King chooses out of those who are in the like condemnation whom he will have the objects of his mercy, and whom he will make the monuments of his justice. Mercy is his own prerogative; and he has a right to bestow it when and where he pleases. And this sovereignty of his is an amiable and benevolent sovereignty; not being exercised capriciously, but according to the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness.

Then said the Interpreter, I will show you a little more. So he took them to another place, and they saw a wounded man supported by several attendants, and the surgeons examining his wound. They saw also the man who had wounded him, in the hands of the officers of justice, who were about to lead him away to his trial.—Then said the surgeons, we have examined the wound; and we find, that the wounded man had, in his vital parts, a disease, which would soon have destroyed his life, had it not been opened. But this wound has opened the part, and will probably save his life.—Then they followed the man who had inflicted the wound to the court of justice, and he was put upon his defence. He said he had indeed inflicted the wound with the intention of killing the other; but since it appeared from the report of the surgeons that he had saved his life, he claimed not only an acquittal from the charge laid against him, but the reward promised to such as save the life of another. But the court decided, that he must be judged according to his intentions; and since these were criminal, he must suffer the punishment which the law annexed to his offence.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this?

In. This shows the folly of those who teach that utility constitutes virtue. The man who wounded his fellow, had murder in his heart. By the hand of Providence, however, his weapon was so directed, that he saved the life he intended to destroy. He really accomplished good, while he intended evil. But the court justly decided, that though he had not accomplished the evil he intended, he was still criminal, and must be punished acccordingly. Judas also who betrayed his master, and those who condemned and crucified him, really accomplished good, while they intended evil. They accomplished the wise and benevolent purpose of our Lord the King, thus to provide an atonement for the sins of the world for which we all have occasion to rejoice and give thanks to the King, and to the Prince Immanuel, who consented thus to die.—But these wicked men intended evil and were justly condemned for it; and some of them, at least, if not all, felt and acknowledged it, and condemned themselves.—And so it is in all cases. While wicked men intend evil by what they do, our Lord and King intends and accomplishes good by it all. So that, while we blame and condemn them for their wicked design in what they do, we have occasion to bless and praise our Lord the King for the good which he designs and thus accomplishes.

RICHARD BAXTER.

The following striking interposition of Providence, is said to have taken place during Mr. Baxter's residence at Coventry.—

Several ministers ejected by the act of uniformity, who resided in this city, united with Mr. Baxter in establishing a lecture in a private house, on a neighbouring common. The time of worship was generally a very early hour. Mr. Baxter left Coventry in the evening, intending to preach the lecture the following morning.—The night being dark, he lost his way, and after wandering about a considerable time, he came to a gentleman's house, where he asked for direction. The servant informed his master, that a person of very respectable appearance, was at the door. The gentleman, thinking it would be unsafe for such a person to be wandering on the common at so late an hour, requested the servant to invite him in. Mr. Baxter readily accepted the kind proposal, and met with a very hospitable reception. His conversation was such as to give his host an exalted idea of his good sense and extensive information. The gentleman, wishing to know the quality of his guest, said after supper, " As most persons have some employment or profession in life, I have no doubt, sir, that you have yours." " Yes, sir, I am a man catcher. " A man-catcher, (said the gentleman,) are you? I am very glad to hear you say so, for you are the very person I want. I am a justice of the peace in this district, and am commissioned to seize the person of Dick Baxter, who is expected to preach at a conventicle in this neighbourhood early to-morrow morning, you shall go with me, and I doubt not we shall easily apprehend the rogue." Mr. Baxter very prudently assented to accompany him. Accordingly, the next morning, the gentleman took Mr. Baxter in his carriage to the place where the meeting was to be held. When they arrived at the spot, they saw a considerable number of people hovering about; for seeing the carriage of the justice, and suspecting his intentions, they were afraid to enter the house. The justice observing this, said to Mr. Baxter, " I am afraid they have obtained information of my design, Baxter has probably been apprized of it, and will not fulfil his engagement; for you see the people will not enter into the house. I think if we extend our ride a little farther, our departure may encourage them to assemble, and on our return we may fulfil our commission." When they returned, they found their efforts useless, for the people still appeared unwilling to assemble. The magistrate, thinking he should be disappointed of the object he had in view, observed to his companion, " That as the people were very much disaffected to government, he would be obliged to him to address them, on the subject of loyalty and good behaviour."—Mr. Baxter replied, " That perhaps this would not be deemed sufficient: for as a religious service was the object for which they met together, they would not be satisfied with advice of that nature; but if the magistrate would begin with prayer, he would then endeavor to say something to them." The gentleman replied, putting his hand to his pocket, "Indeed, sir, I have not got my prayer-book with me, or I would readily comply with your proposal. However, I am persuaded a person of your appearance and respectability, would be able to pray with them, as well as talk to them. I beg therefore, that you will be so good as to begin with prayer." This being agreed to, they alighted from the carriage and entered the house, and the people hesitating no longer, followed them.—Mr. Baxter then commenced the service by prayer, and prayed with that seriousness and fervour for which he was so eminent.—The magistrate standing by was soon melted into tears. The good divine then preached in his accustomed, lively, and zealous manner. When he had concluded, he turnud to the magistrate, and said, "Sir, I am the very Dick Baxter of whom you are in pursuit, I am at your disposal." The justice however had felt so much during the service, and saw things in so different a light, that he laid aside entirely all his enmity to the non-conformists, and ever afterward became their sincere friend and advocate, and it is believed also a decided christian.

PRAYER FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Your prayers for the success of the christian ministry must be attended with christian holiness and virtue, in your tempers and lives. What a shocking absurdity is it for any to pray for the divine assistance, and success of the gospel ministry, while they neither heartily believe the doctrines, nor obey the precepts of that very religion which their prayers seem to befriend! what egregious trifling, what solemn mockery, what odious hypocrisy is this!

Dr. Tappan.

LOVE TO GOD.

The first and chief motive which is to influence us to love God with all our hearts, is his infinite dignity and greatness, glory and excellency; or in one word, *his infinite amiableness.* We are to love him with all our hearts, because he is the LORD; because he is what he is, and just such a Being as he is. On this account, primarily, and antecedent to all other considerations, ought he to appear infinitely amiable in our eyes. This is the first and chief reason and ground upon which his *law* is founded, *I am the Lord.*—This, therefore, ought to be the first and chief motive to influence us to obey. The principal reason which moves him to require us to love him, ought to be the principal motive of our love. If the fundamental reason of his requiring us to love him with all our hearts, is because he is what he is, and yet the bottom of our love be something else, then our love is not what his law requires, but a thing of quite another nature.

Dr. Bellamy.

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